

**The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Division of Communication**

**Activating Informed Participation:
An Assessment of Media Effects on Voter Turnout in
the 1998 Hong Kong Legislative Council Election**

By

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**Graduate thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
For the degree of Master of Philosophy**

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Arriving informed participation
in Assessment of Media Effects on Youth
the 1998 Hong Kong Legislative Council Election



For information, please

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Abstract

This study focuses on the media's role and impact on voter turnout in the 1998 Legislative Council Election in Hong Kong. From a normative theory of media in democracy, it is argued that media should "activate informed participation" in a democratic election. Thus, media are expected to play a role in encouraging political participation during an election.

Under this concern a framework is constructed so that media effects on political knowledge, political attitudes, and voter turnout are studied and analyzed. The relationships between news media consumption and various consequences are explained by incorporating concepts and arguments from political communication research, and studies in social psychology.

A brief yet systematic analysis on media coverage of the election, focusing on the notion of strategic coverage, is also conducted so that an empirical basis is established for the discussion of the normative implications of the media effects found.

On the whole, it is found that media contribute to political knowledge, which in turn may affect political attitudes in various ways and contribute to voting. However, by covering the election as a strategic game participated by politicians with no significance for the large public, news media consumption also has negative impacts on voter turnout.

The author argues that, as media play an important role in the political process in Hong Kong. Journalists should recognize that they are a part of the political process and their works would have important consequences on democratization in Hong Kong. The author urges more debates and attention on the issue.

摘要

傳播媒介在民主社會中擔當著一定的角色及功能，其中包括鼓勵公民參與公共事務及提供政治資訊。此研究以此作為焦點，探究媒介在一九九八年立法會選舉中如何及能否向選民提供有用的資訊及鼓勵其投票。通過建立一個研究框架，本文將探討在九八年選舉中傳播媒介對選民在認知態度及投票行為上的影響。

研究發現新聞媒體的使用能夠提高市民對政治的認識，從而影響人的政治態度及令市民的投票意欲增加。但另一方面，媒體使用本身亦對投票意欲有負面影響。而本文亦引用近年政治傳播學及社會心理學的概念及理論，來分析媒體對不同市民不同方面的不同影響。

爲了了解傳媒影響研究結果背後的可能原因及意義，本文亦對傳媒如何報導九八年立法會選舉作了一個簡單而系統的分析。結果顯示傳媒對九八選舉的報導採用了一個“策略角度”。此策略角度是傳媒的負面影響的最可能原因之一。

本文作者強調傳播媒介在香港政治中起著重要的作用，而媒介對政治的報導亦對香港的持續民主化有著重要的影響。作者指出傳媒確其作為政治過程一部分的這個事實。香港傳媒在政治問題上的角色實在需要各界更大的關注及更多的討論。

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Usually what are written in the acknowledgements of theses would include something about how the authors have suffered and struggled in writing the thesis, followed by a lot of thanks to many people. But I find that I have very few sufferings and memories of frustrations to offer (or I just want to forget them all). Doing research is something that I enjoy (regardless whether you think my work is enjoyable).

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I. Introduction

While election studies constitute the bulk of political communication research in Western countries, especially the US, similar research in Hong Kong is still at its incipient stage. As democracy was only introduced in the 1980s and direct elections did not exist in Hong Kong until 1991, researchers still have much work to do in order to achieve an understanding of the electoral process of Hong Kong.

This research aims at studying a particular aspect of the 1998 Legislative Council (LegCo) election in Hong Kong – the role and impact of the media in the electoral process regarding the problem of voter turnout. This research will focus on the geographical constituencies in the 1998 election. While the whole LegCo were returned by geographical constituencies, functional constituencies and election committee, only the first one has direct elections in which all Hong Kong adult permanent residents are eligible voters. Although only 20 seats were returned by the method, it is the only procedure among the three that can be said as truly democratic. It is also the component of HK LegCo election expected to expand in the future under further democratization. Though if the Basic Law of Hong Kong is not amended (and it is unlikely that it will be amended), Hong Kong people still have to wait for at least 10 more years.

In doing research on Hong Kong elections, two particular principles have to be kept in mind. First, as Tao (1995a) argued, communication behavior is not an isolated phenomenon, its content, format and functions all have inextricable relations with the political environment, institutional rules, professional standards and cultural values of a society. The context inside which the election and political communication take place should not be neglected.

On the other hand, it is also important to bring about a dialogue with similar studies in other contexts. Through the comparisons we can discover the similarities

and dissimilarities in the electoral and communication processes in different societies. Without conducting a comparative study, the large amount of theoretical works and empirical research about election and political communication in other countries are an important reference point for local researchers in designing their studies and explaining their results. In this study, theoretical frameworks and empirical research in the West are used as the basis of organization, with discussions about and references to the local context intermingled in it.

The study will be divided into the following parts. This introductory chapter will give a discussion on the aim and scope of the research. Chapter 2 will provide a brief discussion of the context in which the 1998 LegCo election was held, as well as a general discussion about the potential influence of the political media in Hong Kong. Chapter 3 will give an overview of some basic theoretical and research approaches towards election studies, turnout and media effects. That would make clear the approaches used and assumptions made in this research. Chapter 4 will further explicate and develop the theoretical framework utilized in this research. Chapter 5 will inform the readers about the methods used for data collection. Chapter 6 to 8 will present the results from analyzing the survey data on media effects in the election. Chapter 9 will give a brief analysis of media content to shed light on the results of survey analysis, and provide cues about media performance regarding its encouraging, or discouraging, participation. Chapter 10 will be the conclusion.

The research question

The main focus of the research is on media effects on voter turnout in the 1998 LegCo election. However, the question is not simply an empirical one, that is, existence or non-existence of certain effects. Rather, it is related to a normative view of media role and performance in elections, or in democratic societies in general. That is, the empirical existence of media effects would have normative implications. Here, the importance of voter turnout, media effects, and the effect-performance

relationship will be discussed in turn. Then the aim of the study will be stated.

Among the large amount of work done on election and voting, the problem of voter turnout has received relatively less attention than vote choice. There are at least three main reasons behind this relative lack of concern. First, some countries require voting by law. For instance, some European governments (e.g, Italy) would sanction people who fail to go out to vote. As a result, turnout rates in these countries are constantly extremely high and the cause is clear. Second, even in countries without such regulations turnout rates may still attain very satisfactory levels. If a country has an average turnout rate of around 70 to 80 percent, then the problem of voter turnout would also become less important. A 100 percent turnout rate is not necessary for the well being of a democracy¹. When the turnout rate remains high, the problem of “who wins” would become a much more interesting, if not much more important, topic. Third, in a long established democracy, fluctuations in voter turnout rates between elections are usually small. As Lang and Lang (1968) stated, “in a structural view, levels of electoral participation appear to be fairly stable attributes of the political system, reflecting the influence of cultural, historical and social factors operating independently of the other circumstances surrounding an election” (p.66).

However, in a society that does not have a high turnout rate, there are important reasons for concerns. This explains why US researchers, facing declining turnout rates in the past three decades, have started to pay more attention on the turnout problem in recent years (Teixeira, 1987, 1992; Weaver, 1994; Joslyn, 1984). Low voter turnout may arouse concerns among candidates as increasing the number of voters may be beneficial to some parties and disadvantageous to others. In Hong Kong, it is often argued that increasing voter turnout would help the democrats. Thus it is sometimes assumed that the democrats have a larger stake in increasing the

¹ Some theorists even argue that a certain portion of the public being apathetic is good and necessary for a democracy. It is because the apathetic public does not have any particular political affiliation, provides the target for competing factions to persuade. They can act like a buffer zone, which can alleviate the direct conflicts between competing factions in a society.

turnout². More important, as Teixeira (1992) pointed out, a low turnout rate is detrimental for democratic legitimacy. The representative-ness of the elected officials runs into question if they receive support only from a restricted portion of the public. The agenda they put forward becomes the agenda of a small group of people. The result can range from "widespread social and political disorganization to the reinforcement of some of the milder social pathologies [the American public] already see: gridlock government and a political culture that turns talented people away from careers in public service" (p.3).

In a place like Hong Kong where democracy is only partial and developing, increasing turnout is important for continuing democratization. A higher turnout rate would make the democrats' call for speedy democratization stronger. More important, as Almond and Verba (1963) argued, a democracy is characterized as having a democratic political culture, of which political participation is a very important component. Voting is only the most basic kind of political participation in a democratic society, other kinds of participation may range from participating in campaign activities in election times, to participating in community activities and personal contacts with officials (Nie and Verba, 1972). Research has shown that the Hong Kong public is not very active in political participation but not completely apathetic. Lau and Kuan (1995) argue that the Hong Kong public can be characterized as the attentive spectators, who do not participate actively in public affairs but pay a considerable amount of attention to them through the media. However, as democracy develops, citizens would be required to act more actively.

² The reason for this expectation is that the pro-China parties and organizations have a strong and more direct relationship with their supporters. Their mobilizing power is greater. While the Democrats enjoy wider support in the society as a whole, they do not have very strong mobilizing power and direct relationship with their supporters. Thus, if turnout rate is low it would include a larger proportion of supporters of pro-China parties. Nevertheless, there is no systematic research on whether this is actually the case, and politicians themselves usually deny or neglect this argument in public.

Questions on media effects have attracted communication researchers' attention for more than half a century. Different conceptions of media effects have marked different eras of effect research, from the hypodermic needle paradigm, to the limited effects model, to the renewed interest in media effects starting from the 70s. Media effects are surely among the important concerns in modern society even if evidence of powerful media effects has not yet been conclusive (Bartels, 1993).

Existence or absence of media effects has been demonstrated and discussed by many researchers in the West. The limited effects model, based upon the research findings by Lazarsfeld and his colleagues in the 40s, dominated the understanding about media effects for decades. Lang and Lang (1968) stated its principle as follow,

very few of the effects of mass communication are immediate and direct, most are cumulative in that they usually involve prior exposure to other communications that set a framework within which any specific item of information is perceived (p.4).

However, starting from the 1970s researchers have renewed their interests in media effects. In the larger arena of communication research this resurgence was not unrelated to the success of a number of new hypotheses, such as agenda-setting, knowledge-gap etc. More important perhaps are the re-conceptualizations of effects and reformulations of the research questions. While effect research in 1950s and 60s has focused mainly on attitudinal change, research into the 70s has incorporated various cognitive effects into account. Also, while the existence and non-existence of effects were the main question in the past, researchers now are more interested in the mechanism of effects³. According to McQuail (1994), media effects research

³ Re-conceptualizing effects and reformulating the focus of research as the mechanisms rather than existence of effects per se are related to the widespread use of cognitive psychology and social psychology in the field. These developments have broadened the scope of study and strengthened the theoretical basis of effects research. Actually, reviewing the research in recent years, the overall conclusion that can be drawn may not be different from that of the earlier era: some people will be affected some times under some conditions. But the difference is that researchers nowadays are more

starting from the 80s is greatly affected by the rise of “social constructivism,” leading to a new era of effect research that can be named as “audience negotiated influence.” In sum, the incorporation of theories and hypotheses from other fields including sociology and psychology, together with improvements in methodologies, have led to the continuation of effect research with a widened landscape.

For studies of media effects in elections, beginning from the 70s US researchers re-evaluated the political and media environment. Patterson (1980) argues that the decline of partisanship in America, well documented by Nie *et al.* (1979), allowed the media to exert more influence. The rise of television as a powerful medium also deserves attention. Similarly, Holbrook (1996) put forward four arguments for campaign effects. They are: 1) a significant number of people make their decisions during the campaign, 2) party identification has declined, 3) there are significant fluctuations in candidate support during the campaign period, and 4) elections become more and more media oriented.

Review and discussions of relevant studies and findings will be given in the next chapter. From the brief discussion above we see that media effects study will be meaningful from the theoretical standpoint if new theories and approaches are incorporated. The significance of effect research also depends on the actual social context. In the next chapter it will be pointed out that there are reasons supporting us paying attention to media effects in Hong Kong, where studies in political communication in general are lacking, let alone specific studies about media effects on voters. There are a few pioneering articles (Cheung, 1995; Chan, 1995), but the conclusions that can be drawn are still very limited. And one of the basic goals of this study is to provide a more systematic and rigorous analysis of media effects in Hong Kong elections regarding a particular problem – the voter turnout.

able to specific the “somes,” and they are more able to explain why effects sometimes exist, and also why they do not exist at other times.

Media performance is another area of concerns attracting great attention from researchers and the public alike. Media performance is both a normative and an empirical question, concerning what media did with reference to what they should do, while media effect concerns mainly what media actually did. However, the two areas are not unrelated and studying media performance and effects together would provide us a better understanding of media's role and functions in elections. For instance, McLeod, McLeod and Kosicki (1994) strongly suggested that,

The connection between normative democratic standards for the media and empirical political communication research.....should be restored. In democratic societies, normative expectations can serve as useful criteria for evaluating the performance of media institutions and the workings of political communication more generally.....Examinations of performance requires going beyond critiques of media content and other institutional outputs to study individual cognitive, affective, and behavioral effects of these products (p.124).

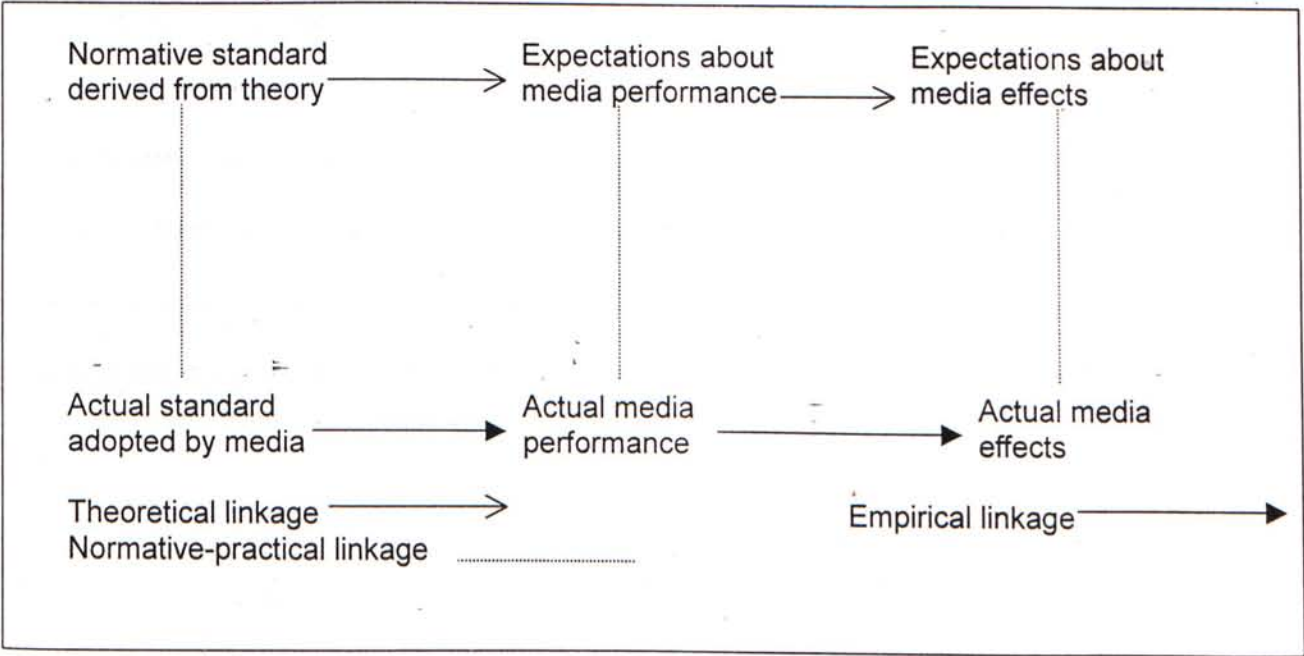
While McLeod *et al.* argued that performance research should move one step forward to study effects, we can also argue that effect research needs to pay more attention to the normative implications of effects, and the relationship between effects and performance. Some scholars describe the move to develop theoretical hypotheses that would integrate media institution, content, and effect research as "horizontalization" (McLeod, Kosicki and Pan, 1991; Neuman, 1989). This horizontalization is important in several ways. First, normative theories about media performance and empirical research on content and media institutions can generate hypothesis about effects, as well as specific criteria for interpreting effects. Second, specific to effect research, scholars have tried to explain why evidence of media effects has been weak or even inconsistent over the years. Some have pointed to the problem of measurement (e.g. Bartels, 1993; Zaller, 1996), others have started to look at the content and media practices for reasons. Third, the significance and implications of media effects need to be better articulated. Combining effect research

and other types of media research can help researchers to argue for the importance and implications of the effects found. Further, while the traditional social scientific approach to media effects is to try to find out the generalizable laws or rules, effects are not always, or even always not, universal. Most effects of the media are the results of media performing in a certain way in a certain context. Linking content and performance in specific contexts to the existence or absence of effects can make us aware of the desirability of effects and the possibility of change and improvement.

The aim of the study

Thus, this study starts from a normative concern that democratization in Hong Kong is desirable and the development of a more participatory culture is needed. Then what is the role we expect the media to play in the process? In what way the media are expected to perform? With what effects? Theoretically, if a study has to answer the questions comprehensively, it has to tackle the linkages in the following Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1 A possible scope of study regarding media effects and performance



Of course, it is not necessary for a study to cover all the linkages, and it is impossible for the present author to tackle all the linkages in this study. Instead, the

present study will provide a discussion on the normative standard of activating informed participation derived from a normative view of democracy, and the expectations regarding performance and effects implied by the standard. In the empirical study, there are three possible places for discrepancies between the ideal and the real – that between the normative standard itself and the standard (news values, principles etc) adopted by news workers, that between the expected and actual performance, and that between the expected and actual effects. In this study the main focus will be on the problem of effects. However, the discovery of effects naturally call for explanation, and it is unsatisfactory to present evidence on effect without some empirical and conceptual analysis on how such effects might be related to media content and practices. With the normative concern in mind there is also a need for a discussion about the normative implications of the effects. Therefore, some systematic analysis of media content will be incorporated to provide empirical cues for explanations and normative implications of media effects, and also for a preliminary assessment of media performance. Nevertheless, it should be stressed that the analysis of content serves only a supplementary role in the whole study. This study does not contain the design needed to test any hypothesis on the relation between content attributes and effects criteria. The discussion on the media content is mostly conceptual. However, the content analysis remains an integral part of this study. Without it, the analysis on media effects could not be convincingly situated in the overall normative framework. In addition, the content analysis part will also raise additional questions that would help to point out the direction of future research.

II. The background of the 1998 election

As this study is on the 1998 LegCo election in Hong Kong, a brief review of the background of the election is warranted.

As a British colony for more than 150 years, Hong Kong's economy started to develop in the 1950s and 1960s when a large number of refugees came to Hong Kong from the mainland, providing capital and labor to the society. Until early 80s, the Hong Kong society was marked by a lack of local identity, an authoritarian colonial government that gave people a considerable degree of freedom, rapid economic growth and prosperity, and an overwhelming quest for social stability instead of politics. As a refugee society, Hong Kong people at that time had stability as their utmost concern and politics was something to avoid. Exceptions might include those people who were still very much concerned with politics in China. Further, the Hong Kong government succeeded in incorporating the remaining elites who might want to enter the local political arena by the process now famously phrased as "administrative absorption of politics" (King, 1981). These features led to the formation of the "minimally integrated social-political system" (Lau, 1982), in which people did not have strong political needs and requests (Tse, 1995).

The situation changed when the British and Chinese governments started to negotiate the return of Hong Kong to China. Knowing that the Chinese government was insistent on getting Hong Kong back, the British government started to develop democracy in Hong Kong. A schedule was set so that by the time of Hong Kong's return to China, a partial democracy would have been established for democratization to continue. Certainly, the Chinese government was conservative about democratizing Hong Kong. And the British government was also careful in designing the schedule of democratization, and at times adjusting the schedule in the face of Chinese pressure.

The Tiananmen Incident in 1989 provided an important thrust for further democratization. The incident had important consequences on Hong Kong's political development. First, Hong Kong people became more supportive for democracy after witnessing how their future government would crack down peaceful protests. Second, a group of elite and social activists gained their prominence and credibility as political leaders through organizing and leading protests and activities during the period, while a group of pro-China politicians lost their political clout. Some of the "new born political leaders" later joined hands to form the Hong Kong Democratic Union, arguably the first political party in Hong Kong. With the landslide victory of HKDU in the 1991 LegCo election (Kwok *et al.*, 1992), citizens and politicians started to recognize the development of party politics as the irreversible trend.

Moreover, the events in 1989 also changed the dynamics in the Sino-British relationship. As Lau (1998) stated, after 1989 "Sino-British relationship turned sour as a result of the anti-China united front of the Western powers in which Britain played an active part" (p.18). To reduce the fear and anxiety existing in Hong Kong society after 1989, the British government introduced various projects including large-scale infrastructure development in Hong Kong and giving the right to live in Britain for a small sector of the Hong Kong public. The Chinese government reacted fiercely and skeptically. Then, in 1992, the British government headed by John Major appointed Chris Patten, an experienced politician, to be the "last governor" of Hong Kong. It was a break with the British tradition of appointing diplomats from the Foreign Affairs Department to be the chief executive of Hong Kong's colonial government. Judging by hindsight, the appointment of Patten "presaged the adoption of a hard-line stance towards democratic reform of the LegCo, to the extent of denying any agreements Britain had signed with China" (Lau, 1998, p.6).

Patten's political reform announced in his first policy address has led to unending controversies and quarrels between China and Britain in the last few years of the transition period. Basically, the 1995 LegCo election, following Patten's plan,

was to be elected by the three different procedures – geographical constituencies, functional constituencies, and election committee – that the British and Chinese governments have agreed upon. However, to inject more democratic favors into the election the voting age was lowered from 21 to 18. More important, the election committee in 1995 was composed of councillors of the District Boards, who had been directly elected by the public in District Board elections. Thus the election committee in 1995 was effectively a body of democratic indirect election. Besides, the functional constituencies in 1995 had an electoral base extended to more than 2 millions by giving virtually every individual working in a particular sector the right to vote in those elections. Patten's reform skillfully avoided literal violation of the Basic Law. But of course, the Chinese government was greatly irritated by the reform. Before this controversy, there was a "through train" agreement reached by the two countries that legislators elected in 1995 could straightly enter the first post-handover LegCo, if some basic requirements are met (like pledging allegiance to the Hong Kong SAR government). However, with Patten's reform underway the Chinese government thought that the 1995 LegCo was composed by a method not according to Sino-British agreements and the Basic Law. The Chinese government decided to "set up a new stove."

The Provisional Legislature was the product. It was established to fill the void between the handover and the first LegCo election. Whether the Provisional Legislature is legitimate is a matter out of the scope of discussion here. Suffice it to say that the Provisional Legislature was not even partially popularly elected, and the democrats in Hong Kong refused to join it⁴.

The Provisional Legislature was finally to be replaced by an elected Council in 1998. Like the past LegCo elections, the seats were to be returned by three separate

⁴ The Chinese government did not rule the democrats out of the Provisional Legislature, but there is the suspicion that the democrats would have found it hard to get in the Provisional LegCo even if they decided to join.

procedures. Ten seats were to be elected by an election committee, which members had been selected by the Chinese government. Thirty seats were to be returned through functional constituencies, which had an electoral base of around 140,000 voters in total only (mostly corporate voters). Twenty seats were to be returned by direct elections in geographical constituencies in which about 4 millions Hong Kong adult permanent residents were eligible to vote. Registration was required before voting. There were about 2.8 millions people registered as voters at the end of the government registration campaign conducted in late 1997 and early 1998, in which about 250,000 people registered as voters for the first time.

The election was not without prominent controversies. In general the election was viewed as a step backward in democratization. The Chinese government insisted to re-adjust the pace of democratization and the progress brought about by Patten's political reform was to be dismissed (like narrowing the number of eligible voters in the functional constituency elections). Second, the electoral system was changed from single-seat-single-vote system to a proportional-representation system. The system was first criticized by the democrats as a conspiracy to reduce the power of the democrats' clique in the LegCo⁵. While it is a fact that Hong Kong has never had a stable, often used electoral system, the new system was also heavily criticized by politicians and analysts alike as much more complex than the previous one for the public to understand (see Appendix C for a discussion). In fact, with these controversies media coverage of the election was mainly negative during late 1997 and early 1998.

In addition, the Hong Kong society appeared to be not interested in the election. From media reports we saw candidate debates cancelled due to the lack of audience, opinion polls consistently showing a lack of cognition and interest in the upcoming election. The media also did not give an overwhelming amount of coverage about the

⁵ The criticism follows from the fact that the proportional-representation system is less conducive for the large parties to gain a majority of seats.

election. Judging by hindsight, we could attribute these indications to problems other than political apathy – there were too many organizations organizing too many debates, questions asked in polls were not realistic, some findings from polls were over-emphasized while others downplayed, and the media's coverage only reflected how the media viewed the election. However, during the campaign period these phenomena led media and political analysts to agree on an estimate of a 30-35% turnout rate (based on registered voters).

But on May 24, with heavy rain for most of the day, 53% of registered voters went to the voting booth. It broke the record of Hong Kong's history of democracy, and also the glasses of the analysts and observers. Given only 70% of eligible voters in Hong Kong were registered, a turnout rate of 53% was not actually very high by international standard, but it is not very low either⁶. This has pointed out another significance of the question of voter turnout. In the 1998 election, the high turnout rate was a surprise. Researchers are now trying hard to understand the causes, implications and significance associated with it. This study focuses on one of the possible factors that we can trace back to, that is, the mass media. Of course, it is very unlikely that the media will be the most important factor behind the voter turnout, but they should not be ignored. It is because, in theory, media have become the main arena of political communication in a modern society. But looking at the specific context of Hong Kong, are there any special characteristics in Hong Kong politics and democratization making the media an important actor?

The likely-to-be-influential media in Hong Kong

Before discussing the importance of media in Hong Kong politics, it should be noted that Hong Kong is still in the process of democratization. Democracy, like the city of Rome, is not something that can be built in one day. The partial character of

⁶ That means the turnout rate is about 37% if calculated based on eligible voters. It is not a large figure but comparable to the turnout rate of US off-year Congress elections. See Joslyn (1984).

Hong Kong's democracy can be seen from three different levels. At the system level, the political system is still in many aspects not democratic. Hong Kong's chief executive, no matter the colonial Governor in the past or the Chief Executive now, has never been directly elected. Government departments are not headed by politicians from political parties but by civil servants promoted within the government bureaucracy. There is a general lack of political accountability in the system⁷. The governing style of the Hong Kong government has long been known as executive-led. This has effectively deprived political parties or other elected representatives the chance of formulating and implementing their own policies. This greatly limits the role and power of them in the political processes. Politicians in Hong Kong can only enter councils at various levels, and entering the LegCo becomes the highest possible achievement of them in the meantime. In effect, all political parties in Hong Kong become opposition parties (Lee, 1993)⁸.

At the societal level, Hong Kong people are not particularly active in politics. Voter turnouts in 1991 and 1995 LegCo elections were low. In a survey conducted in 1993, Lau and Kuan (1995b) found that for all kinds of political participation they have listed (excluding voting and media use), consistently more than 90% of respondents reported that they never engaged in them, with attending rallies and sit-ins as the only exception⁹. Many researchers have pointed out that political apathy was partly due to the fact that they recognize the constraints in the system about what the people and their elected representatives can do (Chui, 1993; Cheng, 1996). Other researchers have pointed out that it is part of the culture of the Hong Kong

⁷ The unaccountability is demonstrated by the fact that no officials have ever resigned since the handover despite the economic turmoil in Hong Kong and various chaos like the "bird flu crisis," the new airport chaos, etc..

⁸ To say that all political parties are opposition parties do not mean that they always oppose the government. Some parties, actually, are always supportive to the government. The point here is that, as political parties do not have the formal institutional role as policy-makers and implementers, their role become mainly on checking government power and criticizing government policies.

⁹ However, DeGolyer (1998) shows similar findings and argues that the figures are not particularly low when compared to other democratic countries.

Chinese (Chan, 1993; Lau and Kuan, 1992; Kuan and Lau, 1995). However, the Hong Kong public is not totally alienated from the political process, a large portion of them pay considerable levels of attention to politics and public affairs through the news media, which make them "attentive spectators" (Lau and Kuan, 1995).

At the institutional level, Hong Kong does not have a strong political party system. Political parties have a short history in Hong Kong. They do not have strong ties with the public and well-articulated policy platforms. Again part of the problems lies in the political system itself (Lee, 1993). Part of the problem is the political culture in which many people are reluctant to render support for political parties and in general, people do not have a high level of trust towards the "politicians" (Lau, 1994; 1998b). The lack of experience of the politicians themselves may also account for part of the problem. In a general sense, the party system now existing in Hong Kong still does not carry out the functions of interest aggregation, articulation and political mobilization to the extent that their counterparts in developed democracies do.

From this discussion of the partial characteristics of Hong Kong democracy we can already see the reasons why the media are an important actor in the political process. In political communication research it is almost a truism that common people have very little direct experience with politics while media constitute the most important channel of information for them. This is especially true in Hong Kong as the spectator role prevails among the public and the fact that other institutions linking the public and the government, like parties and interest groups, are relatively weak. For instance, political parties in Hong Kong generally do not have a strong organization and connection with the mass (except a few leftist political groups), they are not very strong mobilizing agents and have to rely on the media to a large extent to communicate with the public (Cheng, 1996). Media coverage of political parties has been a major factor in the increasing legitimacy of political parties in Hong Kong (Fung, 1995; 1998). In this case, media become a more important mobilizing agent

as others are comparative weaker and even dependent on the media. In Hong Kong there is even a lack of political socialization beginning from a person's childhood due to the lack of political education in schools (Tse, 1997). In Western countries, while the media are regarded as responsible for creating the "pictures in the public's head," the socialization process is also important for orienting the citizens to the system itself and develop the diffuse support for the system. In other words, socialization is responsible for creating a "basic picture of politics in people's heads." However, in Hong Kong these basic pictures about the democratic system are lacking. Of course, at the theoretical level whether the media can be relied on as the central political socializing agent and mediating political institutions can be debated. But it can be suggested that the importance of the media in Hong Kong is at least partly stemmed from the fact that, while in developed democracies there is usually a large number of players in the political process taking up different roles and performing different functions, the lack of these players in Hong Kong politics allow the media a larger potential influence in the society.

Another factor making the media likely to be influential in Hong Kong politics is that they are one of the most trusted institutions in the political process. Although the credibility of the Hong Kong media is on the decline due to their various "unethical conducts" in recent years, they are still rated higher by the public when compared with the government, political parties and other institutions on questions relating to their roles in the political process. Table 2.1 shows the results of a survey conducted in 1995 and reported by Lau (1998b). The news media consistently achieved the best rating in the four questions asked. Among the political actors they are the most trusted, and most representative as perceived by the public. In terms of public's perceived influence on the actors and perceived motives of the actors, the media also have the best scores. It is well known that as an actor's credibility increases its influence increases. Thus Table 2.1 provide further suggestions that media are likely to be influential among the Hong Kong public.

Table 2.1 Public opinions towards various political actors
 (source: Lau Siu-kai (1998b). *Democratization, Poverty of Political Leaders, and Political Inefficacy in Hong Kong*. p.13 – 14)

Political Actors	Trust (1)		Representative-ness (2)		Influence (3)		Motives (4)	
	Mistrust	Trust	Cannot	Can	Little	Large	Service	Self
Governor Patten	31.8	15.7	65.4	9.8	61.2	8.4	10.3	22.8
LegCo	19.4	25.0	43.6	26.5	55.4	4.4	12.3	20.3
PWC (5)	30.7	9.3	55.9	6.6	56.6	5.2	8.8	24.0
Civil servants (6)	15.2	27.2	51.5	22.8	59.8	10.3	17.9	21.8
DP (7)	25.0	17.6	44.4	22.1	56.4	3.7	14.5	17.2
LP (8)	30.4	27.2	52.0	12.5	58.8	1.5	9.6	23.5
DAB (9)	27.3	9.3	48.8	14.0	57.6	2.7	9.1	18.9
News media	10.3	46.1	30.4	41.7	49.8	13.8	33.3	12.5

Notes:

- (1) Whether respondents trust the actors. Other answering categories included average, no answer and don't know.
- (2) Whether the actors can represent the respondent's view. Other answering categories included sometimes, no answer and don't know.
- (3) Whether the respondent thinks s/he has influence on the actors. Other answering categories included average, no answer and don't know.
- (4) Respondents' judgment of the motive of the actors. The two answers shown are social service and self interest, other categories included both, don't know and no answer.
- (5) Preliminary Working Committee, a consultative body set up by the Chinese government before the handover.
- (6) For the second and third question, the data are respondents' rating of Hong Kong government.
- (7) Democratic Party
- (8) Liberal Party
- (9) Democratic Alliance for the Betterment of Hong Kong

Then, what about media's influence in election? For many politicians and researchers, media are too important to be neglected. The late legislator Ng Ming-yum (1995) said in a conference about election and media after winning in the 1991 LegCo election, "[The media] affected the result of the election to a very large extent.....you did not only report the process of election, your presence affected the results, you become a part of the election" (p.54). Researchers also spotted the ubiquitous character of the media and the importance of media as a platform for

election campaign. As Chiu (1993) stated,

the increasing significance of the mass media in campaign mobilization deserve greater attention. In the 1991 [District Board] elections, 56.3% of respondents in a survey alleged to have known the candidates through the mass media. In the 1991 LegCo election, a remarkable 88.3% was recorded.....This can be explained by the fact that the television broadcasting companies had paid substantial effort to closely follow the election, and the newspapers also made special features and columns on the territory's unprecedented political event.

With all these discussions it should be clear that why media are an important actor to be reckoned with in the electoral and political process. Of course, these are no proof of the existence of media effects, but they provide reasons for us to spend efforts to explore them. Their likely impact also points to the importance of them acting in a responsible way so that they would bring about positive consequences to the society, or at least do not damage the society. What are the possible consequences of the media in an election? The next chapter will give a review on the research about election, and more important, media effects in election.

III. Approaches to election and media effect studies

Election studies and research on media effects in elections may involve different approaches. In this part I will review the major approaches in studying election in general, voter turnout, and media effects.

Approaches to election

Election is one of the most salient features of a democracy. For some theorists it is even the defining feature. For instance, Schumpeter (1955) defined the democratic method as the "institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote."

However, there is not only one way to conceptualize what an election is. Joslyn (1984) has recognized four perspectives on election. The first is called prospective-policy-choice approach. In this view, elections provide a mechanism by which the public expresses policy preferences and constrain the future policy choices of public officials. The second perspective is called retrospective-policy-choice approach, which argues that the standard of evaluation used by voters is likely to be a more global assessment of satisfaction with past policy performance. The third is the selection-of-a-benevolent-leader perspective, which sees election as a process by which human societies select leaders to make authoritative decisions. These three can be further combined together under a larger headline, which I call the "people's choice approach." It assumes that the voters have an important and meaningful choice to make in an election – important as it will end up affecting the people's livelihood and the society at large, and meaningful as who wins does make a difference. The emphasis of the people's choice approach is on what decisions people make, and why they make such decisions.

The fourth and final perspective is election-as-ritual. In its critical version, elections are seen as serving the interests of political elite by preserving social stability, keeping the citizenry misinformed, and channeling political participation into a routine, non-threatening and impotent form. Under the ritual perspective the choices involved in a particular election become less important. The government and the winning candidates are provided with legitimacy regardless who wins. Elections become something like a mass in a Church in which people have a collective experience and reconstruct their identities. It results in legitimization of the governing institutions and stabilization of the society. It should be pointed out that the ritual view does not entail a negative view on election. This perspective can be useful if one wants to understand the meanings and significance of, or generated by, some particular features of the election or the campaign communication processes (e.g. Marvin, 1994). And it is also possible to see the legitimating function of campaigns and electoral processes in a positive light (e.g., Just *et al.*, 1996).

This research follows the people's choice perspective. The author believes that elections, and the choices involved, are important and meaningful to the Hong Kong society and its people. Although my concern of voter turnout is related to the legitimization of political institutions, my focus is not on the process of campaign and how the legitimization comes about, the primary focus is still the choice that people have to make, namely, whether to go out to vote or not.

Conceptualizing the voting decision: one step vs. two steps

Then, what are the decisions that a voter has to make? There are two ways to conceptualize the voters' decisions in an election. The first way is to differentiate two steps in the decision making process, i.e., deciding whether to go out to vote, and if yes, then whom to vote for. By this separation two distinct problems in voting research, voter turnout and vote choice, are defined. It is the more conventional and dominant way to conduct voting research.

The second way is to regard non-voting as one of the alternatives that a voter can choose from among others in one single decision. For instance, in an election with two candidates competing for a seat, a voter can choose either voting for candidate A, voting for candidate B, or abstaining. An example of research is Fishbein *et al.* (1985), who argue that voting participation can be predicted more satisfactorily by simultaneously considering all alternatives available to voters and knowing the voters' level of intention to perform each of the alternatives¹⁰.

Thinking about the voting decision as involving only one step may be closer to the reality. Voters are not very likely to clearly differentiate the two steps when they make their decisions. However, the two-step formulation may still be important, since turnout and choice, if not distinct in the people's mind, are distinct in the outcomes of the election. The two results also carry different meanings and implications, and have different types of impacts on the society. Therefore, as I am focusing on voter turnout in this research, I will not consider whom the voters vote for. The turnout decision remains to be dichotomous. Also, by considering the voters' (and non-voters') attitudes towards the candidates, the possibility that people may abstain from voting because of the absence of a good choice should already be at least partially taken into account in the analysis, though not in a detailed way.

Approaches to turnout

Theorists have devised different approaches for the study and explanation of voter turnout. Three kinds of analysis are to be discussed here. They are not only used in explaining turnout but also vote choice. They have different levels of theoretical importance and empirical relevance, and point to different issues and problems in explaining voter turnout.

¹⁰ Fishbein's theory of reasoned action proposed that people's behavior can be explained by people's intention to perform that behavior, which in turns depends on people's attitudes towards the behavior and their subjective norms regarding the behavior. Although research results showed that his theory can predict behavior to a larger extent, the most problematic question is whether the separation

The first kind of analysis is the rational choice model of political decision making, with Anthony Downs as one of its most famous proponents (Downs, 1957). As an economist, Downs assumed that people are rational, i.e., they will choose the best means towards a given end, in political decision-making. The turnout decision involves a cost-benefit calculation. If the costs of going out to vote exceed the benefits, a voter will abstain. The costs of voting includes time and effort spent in deciding and going out to vote, and also the costs in gathering and processing political information. However, the extrinsic benefits of voting would be negligible. Even the election results may have great impacts on people's livelihood, an individual has only one vote. The probability that an individual's vote would affect the election outcome is close to zero. As a result, the utility that can be derived from one's vote is also close to zero (the benefits are "discounted," to use Downs' own word). Moreover, people would have an incentive to free-ride on other people's votes, i.e., let other people choose for them. Finally, the rational choice model simply fails because its logic would lead to the notion of "rational abstention."

In addressing the problem, Downs argues that two points may drive rational men to arrive at different conclusions about the election situation and make the decision to vote. First, rational men in a democracy may be motivated to some extent by a sense of social responsibility, and second, responsibility is a part of the return of voting. Here, Downs points to the importance of maintaining the democratic system a part of the extrinsic benefits of voting, and there is also the intrinsic benefits derived from the act of voting itself. However, as Aldrich and Simon (1986) pointed out, rationally people should not believe that whether they go out to vote would affect the final turnout rate. Thus the benefits of maintaining the system is also discounted to the extent that they become negligible. For intrinsic benefits, as Grofman (1987) argues, it is starting to ask for social and psychological explanations of voter turnout.

of and relationship between attitude towards the behavior, the intention to perform the behavior and the behavior itself are meaningful.

It moves away from rational choice theory and turns towards social psychological explanations.

This does not mean that the rational choice model is completely meaningless. On the contrary, ideas and concepts of the theory, or their modifications, continue to exert great influence on empirical research. However, the explanation and understanding of empirical political behavior require more powerful empirical analysis. There are many approaches and theories to the empirical study of voting behavior. To simplify the matter, two kinds of analysis divided methodologically – individual-level analysis and aggregate-level analysis – are discussed here.

The classic in election studies using the social psychological approach with individual level analysis in US is undoubtedly Campbell *et al.*'s (1960) *The American Voter*. In this study (and others following the same approach), voter turnout and vote choice are explained by a set of psychological attributes, mostly political attitudes and beliefs. For instance, they found that turnout is related to sense of civic duty, political involvement, concern over the election outcome and partisanship.

The types of variables used in explaining voting behavior differ according to the theories a research adopts. But there are also researchers who do not stick to a particular theoretical approach. Instead, different types of variables may be used simultaneously. Behaviors, social environments and experiences may also be taken into account when constructing the set of factors affecting the turnout decision. For instance, a special stream of research in US has focused on the contextual effects of the social environment on individuals (Huckfeldt, 1987). Huckfeldt argued that social contexts in which individuals are living would have effects on individual's other political behavior¹¹.

In Hong Kong, Shum (1996) has included campaign mobilization variables in the regression model for explaining voter turnout in the 1995 LegCo election in Hong

¹¹ What Huckfeldt (1987) had actually found was that individual-based participation, including voting turnout, is not affected by one's neighborhood context. Only social-based participation, like donating

Kong. He found that two of the campaign mobilization variables, telephone canvassing and interpersonal persuasion, are significantly related to turnout. Other significant predictors of turnout in Shum's study include political interests, sense of duty, sense of efficacy, age and occupation.

While the rational choice model is not successful in explaining the empirical phenomenon of turnout, the individual-level analysis of turnout also enjoys limited success. As Aldrich and Simon (1986) pointed out, election studies are more successful in predicting vote choice than turnout. In explanation of vote choice using regression models, an R square of 0.5 is standard in the US. However, when the question comes to turnout, the R square becomes much lower. Researchers have tried different methods of measurement and conceptualization searching for improvements (like Fishbein *et al.*, 1985, as mentioned earlier). One possible reason for the lack of explanatory power that can be tackled more specifically in the present study is that past studies usually tried to use a standard set of variables to account for all individuals' turnout. However, different groups of people may be driven by different factors to go out to vote. In this study, the differences between sophisticated and non-sophisticated people, as will be discussed later, will be analyzed.

To complete the discussion of approaches to turnout study, aggregate-level analysis has also to be considered. Applying to the recent election in Hong Kong, the question this approach asks is not why some individuals vote but others not, but why the election has a turnout rate of 53%. In tackling this question, we may need to refer to a set of structural and contextual factors, like the culture, political development, political and electoral systems, and recent economic performance, of the Hong Kong society. This approach can help us to understand turnout as a macro-level phenomenon. This approach is also not restricted to the study of turnout. For instance, Holbrook (1996) has demonstrated how a set of societal and contextual variables can well explain the level of support an incumbent would enjoy in a US

money, displaying bumper stickers etc., are affected by neighborhood context.

presidential election. However, this approach requires relevant information from a large number of elections in a society. Obviously the short history of direct elections in Hong Kong makes this approach impractical.

Media effects on attitudes and learning

Now we can turn to a discussion of research on media effects, especially effects in elections. As mentioned earlier, researchers in the 50s and 60s generally believed in limited media effects, thus at that time very few researchers have systematically studied them in elections. However, media variables are not totally non-existent in research in that period. Political scientists usually defined media use as part of political participation (e.g., Campbell *et al.*, 1960). Methodologically, media use was utilized as indicators to represent some other concepts like political involvement and interests (e.g., Campbell *et al.*, 1960; Teixeira, 1992; Shum, 1996).

When used in this way, media use is usually significantly related to turnout. For instance, Teixeira (1992) found that, besides factors like decrease in partisanship, concern over outcome, knowledge about parties and social connectedness, the decrease in political involvement and efficacy have contributed to more than half of the decline. And the decrease in campaign involvement through media can account for nearly a quarter of the decline in turnout. In a regression analysis of causes of turnout in Hong Kong, Shum (1996) found that exposure to media campaign, as an indicator of political interests, is significantly related to turnout. Then, does media use have effects of its own? Also, though it is reasonable to use media use as an indicator of political interest, it is also plausible that media use may affect or be affected by other political attitudes, such as efficacy and sense of duty.

There are numerous studies focusing on the relationship between media use and the set of attitudes that could be grouped as one's civic awareness. Patterson (1980) has argued that the relationship between political interest and media exposure is a reciprocal one. By means of a panel study, he even argued that media

exposure's effects on interests were even stronger than the effects in the opposite direction in the 1976 US election. Hagen (1996) shows how citizens' sense of civic duty drives them to expose to news, but at the same time, due to the lack of relevant background information they are frustrated when they find it difficult to understand the news. Cappella and Jamieson (1997), combining media framing analysis with information processing theories, show that the strategic frame used by the media in shaping news stories would activate people's political cynicism. In their experimental studies, subjects exposed to election campaign news and health care reform news with strategic framing were more likely to elicit a higher level of general political cynicism and cynical learning (what people believe they have learned from the news) than those exposed to news with issue framing and those not exposed to news. Though no significant effect was found on cynical motive (what people believe about the motives behind politician's action), the general conclusion given by Cappella and Jamieson (1997) is that media are likely to be a cause behind the rise of cynicism in US politics. Hetherington (1998), by analyzing survey data, showed that television exposure has contributed to lower levels of political trust in the 1988 survey data, though no significant effects exist in the 1996 data. Given this various possible relationships between media use and political attitudes, to single out media use and study its relationship with various attitudes would be meaningful.

Besides its relationship with political attitudes, media consumption has another effect on the audience which is not so controversial but equally intricate. It is the cognitive effects of the media, especially about the acquisition of information.

Research for decades have shown that there are a large number of factors contributing to political knowledge. They include demographic variables, media use, educational level, political interests, perceived utility of political information etc. (see Chaffee and Kanihan, 1997, for a review of past research findings). Short of first-hand experience with political and public affairs, people rely heavily on different media channels to get relevant information. However, behind the simple knowledge

effect hypothesis there are various possible research questions. One is the relative informative-ness of different media, especially the comparison of the effectiveness of television and newspaper. Patterson (1980) argues that television is less effective in informing the public. This view is then further supported by later research. Robinson and Davis (1990) summarize 13 research in US and point out that TV is a less effective informing medium. However, there are also dissenting views and evidence (Chaffee *et al.*, 1994; Price and Zaller, 1993; Graber, 1990).

Another kind of research has focused on the different media content available during an election campaign. In an election media would produce different types of programs besides normal newscasts, such as talk shows and debates. Candidates in the US and other countries may also air advertisements on TV. Chaffee *et al.* (1994) conclude that the informing effects of television advertisements of political candidates seem to be negligible in their study, but other kinds of television events, including conventions, debates, candidate interviews and talk show appearance are associated with higher levels of candidate-issue learning. Zhao and Chaffee (1995) find that television advertisements are not consistently effective in informing the public, while television news attention is related consistently with higher knowledge. In another study about the 1992 US presidential election, Just *et al.* (1996) show that debates and political advertising are both effective means of transmitting messages to the public.

These studies, however, are almost purely empirical and their theoretical values are limited. Starting from mid 80s, more and more research has utilized psychological theories of information processing to explicate the processes of media effects on learning and attitude change. The concept of sophistication and schema are especially important. In cognitive psychology, sophisticates or experts are those who tend to view a set of information in terms of meaningful patterns in it (Krosnick, 1990). Lau and Erber (1985) stated that experts by definition "know more than non-experts [and] have had more experience thinking about it, and they presumably

have learned the most efficacious ways of grouping, categorizing, or organizing information in that domain." (p.38-39) This leads to the notion of schema, which is a knowledge structure with concepts as nodes and links between them, organized hierarchically or non-hierchically. Schemas aid information reception, interpretation, and recall. Thus, political sophistication can be defined as having well organized knowledge structures about political matters that make information processing more efficient¹².

Following the information processing approach, learning from the media can be considered as a process involving a series of steps including exposure, reception, intrerpretation and storage. Sophistication, as a measure of people's cognitive ability, would lead to and condition learning because it facilitates the various steps. For instance, Rhee and Cappella (1997) have shown that political sophistication is related to information recall and various measures of quality of people's answers to questions (like construct differentiation and elaboration).

Research has shown that sophistication is a powerful concept in studying the public opinion process. This research will also make important use of this concept. As democracy is developing in Hong Kong, the public is continually learning to deal with political matters. It is believed that those who learn faster and better, i.e., the sophisticated, would have observable and important differences from the non-sophisticated. Detailed discussion about its conceptualization and operationalization will be given in Chapter 6.

In sum, media have intricate relationships with both political attitudes and political learning. Knowledge, attitudes and sophistication are important intervening factors and mechanisms through which media can exert effects on voting behavior.

¹² This definition is different from the notion of ideological sophistication, developed by Converse (1964, 1975). However, the two notions are not totally unrelated. See Rhee and Cappella (1997) for a discussion.

Some early studies in US about media effects on voter turnout have focused on the problem of early return. The concern is that, due to the time difference from the East to the West coast in America, reports of the estimated results in East coast may affect voting behavior of the people living in West coast (Lang and Lang, 1968; Epstein and Strom, 1981; Jackson, 1983). The results of the studies are mixed, as Delli Carpini (1984) summarized, "these studies, starting from different theoretical assumptions and using different methods, have come to quite different conclusions, ranging from no effect (Epstein and Strom) to a potential decline of 6 to 12 percent (Jackson) [in voter turnout]" (p.867).

More recent studies have focused on effects of other media contents. In an experimental study, Ansolabehere and Iyengar (1994) found that poll results do not significantly affect people's intention to vote, although there are suggestive evidence showing supporters of the leading candidate may be mobilized while supporters of the trailing candidate may be demobilized. In her study, Owen (1991) asked her respondents whether they think they would be affected by polls, and there was a consistent finding of approximately 5 percent in each sample indicated that they would not turn out to vote in an election if their candidates were trailing in the polls. In another study, Ansolabehere and Iyengar (1997) show that, using an experimental method again, negative advertising lowers people's intention to vote after controlling for demographics and party identification.

These studies are clear in focus by studying particular contents' effects on voters, but they are not able to tell us about the overall effects of the media environment on voters. We know that in an election media organizations spend a great deal of efforts to organize programs and reports for the events. Voters are exposed to the media environment as a whole in the campaign period, including newscasts, newspapers, magazines, radio talk shows, television public affairs programming, televised debates, advertising etc. In fact, one particular problem in

searching for media effects is that the news environment contains a large amount of diverse information with effects that may cancel out each other. A person encouraged to vote by a news report that s/he reads in the morning may feel discouraged when s/he hears a poll result on the radio in the afternoon¹³.

In this study the effects of the whole news environment on voters is the concern. Of course, it is very difficult to operationalize and measure the news environment. In this research, I will focus mainly on the news channels of the three most important and conventional mass media – TV, radio and newspaper. The newscasts are not equal to the whole news environment but they remain to be the most important news sources for the Hong Kong public and it is believed that people's consumption of these newscasts can most reliably capture the major "media effects" in the election.

It should be noted that I am focusing on the mass media only. In an election, the public can also be said as situated in an information environment (Just *et al.*, 1996). Information environment and news environment are two largely related and overlapping concepts. The major difference is that information environment contains elements other than mass media. People may also have access to information through candidate campaign activities, interpersonal communication, and candidates campaign communication not involving the media (Huckfeldt and Sprague, 1995). On the other hand, the media environment provides affective elements, like impression and image, as well as cognitive elements, like information.

It is also important to recognize that there are different dimensions in news consumption. Traditionally exposure is the major variable used by researchers, but it only measures one dimension in media use. A person may stay in front of a television set when s/he watches TV news, but at the same time doing other things. People may listen to radio when they are driving or working. Sometimes exposure

¹³ Holbrook (1996), for instance, acknowledges the cancelling-out mechanism of media and candidate campaign messages. He argued that in the long term there is a tendency to return to an equilibrium level determined by structural and contextual parameters in an election. However, if the messages are largely one-sided, strong campaign effects are possible.

can even be accidental and unintentional. Thus exposure does not entail reception of message from the media. Another dimension, people's attention paid to the news when exposing should be taken into account.

This chapter has given a discussion on the relevant literature. In sum, the present study will follow the people's choice perspective of election, which sees election as involving people making meaningful decisions. It will adopt an individual-level analysis with media and social psychological factors as the major variables. The study aims at studying the effects of news consumption in general, rather than the effects of specific media contents. And a number of media's cognitive and attitudinal effects will be studied together, rather than on an one-to-one basis.

IV. Activating informed participation: A conceptual model for empirical evaluation

The previous chapters have provided an overview of the research question and related past research. Here I am going to outline the theoretical framework that guides this study.

As pointed out in Chapter 1, the framework used in this research will be based on a normative view of media's role in a democratic election, or in a democratic society in general. However, discussions on norms regarding how media should act usually have focused on objectivity, equality, and freedom of the press etc (e.g. McQuail, 1992). To a large extent, the overwhelming focus on objectivity and freedom etc is because of the traditional view of the media as an observer of the political process. However, there is a need to review this observer role. As Lichtenberg (1990) puts it,

Traditionally, the press has been conceived as an observer – ideally, a neutral observer – of the political scene. On this view, the press is part of the political process but it is also not part; it stands outside. But events of the last few decades have demonstrated the inadequacy of this view. The press today – the mass media in particular – is one of the primary actors on the political scene, capable of making or breaking political careers and issues.

It is not to argue that the media should abandon the role of neutral observer. The norms of objectivity and freedom are certainly important and closely related to media's role in a democracy, but they seem not to be the most central ones regarding the question of political participation and turnout. Also, the debates surrounding the norms of objectivity and neutrality in the past two decades are so complicated that there is certainly no simple answer to whether and in what sense objectivity is still desired. In general, scholars would agree with Lichtenberg that there is a need to rethink about the proper roles and responsibilities of the media¹⁴. Journalists are

¹⁴ Actually, while Lichtenberg argues for a re-consideration of the role of media, she has also supported the norm of objectivity in her other writings (see Lichtenberg, 1991).

playing roles in the political process and by the works they did they have impacts on the political process. In this sense, journalists are political actors and the media can be conceptualized as a political institution (Cook, 1998).

In a more specific discussion about the relationship between media and democratic values, Gurevitch and Blumler (1990) have summarized eight democratic expectations of media performance. They are:

- 1) Surveillance of the sociopolitical environment. Report developments likely to impinge on the welfare of citizens.
- 2) Identifying key issues, including the forces that have formed and may resolve them.
- 3) Provision of platforms for advocacy by politicians and spokespersons for causes and groups.
- 4) Carrying dialogue across a diverse range of views, as well as between power holders.
- 5) Holding officials accountable for how they have exercised power.
- 6) Providing incentives for citizens to learn, choose, and become involved and informed citizens rather than merely to follow and kibitz over the political process.
- 7) Resisting forces outside the media to subvert their independence, integrity and ability to serve the audience.
- 8) Having a sense of respect for the audience as potentially concerned and able to make sense of his or her political environment.

These eight standards cover a wide area of concerns. They are inter-related and all are relevant to media performance in an election. However, it is impossible to study them all at once. To attain a clearer focus of the study the standard of providing incentives for citizens to learn and become involved and informed is emphasized. The central question of media effects on voter turnout should also be understood as stemming from this normative standard, which I just rename as "activating informed

participation." Under this concept, media should be an information providing channel as well as a participation-provoking channel.

Of course, people may have a sense of uneasiness in thinking that media have to mobilize the people. Here, the standard of activating informed participation must be clearly separated from the "mobilizing ideal" as discussed by Miller (1991), which emphasized that "the media should be firmly subordinated to the state and its primary function should be to encourage whatever the state defines as good" (p.201). The kind of participation that should be activated, according to the standard discussed by Gurevitch and Blumler (1990), is not defined solely by the government or the media, instead it should be based on agreed-upon values of the society.

This in turn raises the problem of how to ascertain what the agreed-upon values are and how people can arrive at it. The issue is related to the ideal of public sphere, a place where private individuals come together as free and equal citizens to discuss public issues rationally (Jurgen Habermas, 1989). And in terms of Gurevitch and Blumler's (1990) discussion we can see that this problem is related to the media as platform providers. The media, in today's society, would be a very important part of the public sphere and they are charged with the responsibility to provide a platform for opinion exchanges and discussions about public issues. However, to discuss the media as a public sphere here would go too far away from the central issue. Two points should be noted here. First, as already pointed out, the standards of media performance in a democracy – the eight standards proposed by Gurevitch and Blumler and other ideals proposed by other theorists – are not unrelated. Instead, the standards should be seen as closely linked with each other. For instance, the standards of surveying the environment, identifying key issues, holding politicians to account for their own conduct can be viewed as the ways by which the media provide information and incentives to act. The focus on activating informed participation in this research is only due to the focus on media effects on voter turnout. Other standards should not be viewed as totally irrelevant.

Secondly, we must recognize that there are constraints and conflicts existing at various levels that make the media difficult to live to the standards. Gurevitch and Blumler (1990) point out four kinds of obstacles hindering the attainment of the standards. These include conflicts among the standards themselves, the gap between the media elite and the public, competition of different kinds of messages for the people's attention, and the constraints from the socio-political and economic environment of a society. They also discussed how constraints appear at different levels, namely the societal level, the institutional level, the intra-organizational level and the audience level.

Adopting the framework of Gurevitch and Blumler (1990), McLeod *et al.* (1994) summarize the problems of constraints, conventions and effects regarding media performance. For the standard of activating informed participation, McLeod *et al.* point out that the ideologies of objectivity and press autonomy are the constraints that make the media unable to live up with the standard. Empirical research in the US has shown that there is a lack of mobilizing information on the media since they have to avoid accusations of bias (Lemert, 1977; 1981). This has led to undesirable effects. At the individual level, it leads to increase in political apathy, lower levels of political involvement and perceived efficacy. At the system level, it leads to limited, indirect and distorted feedback from the public to policy-makers and the concentration of decision-making power (McLeod *et al.*, 1994, p.128-129).

Thus, we have to bear in mind the possible constraints the media are facing, and the possible contradictions in the arguments regarding the role of media. Considering the issue of constraints is especially important when the normative implications of media effects are discussed.

Expected media effects under activating informed participation

The relationship between media use and political attitudes have long been the central focus of media effects and political communication research. Though early

research suggested that media do not directly affect people's attitudes except reinforcing them. Research in recent years shows otherwise. In the previous chapters we see that the relationship between media use and attitudes favoring participation are not always positive. While media use is usually found to be positively related to interests and involvement, it is also found to be negatively related to efficacy or political trust in other cases. In this research, we will see whether media use in Hong Kong would be related to various political attitudes in ways similar or different from past research in Hong Kong or other countries.

One particular problem of most of the previous studies is that they usually focus only on the relationship between media use and one particular attitude. There are many extraneous factors not being taken into account. Rather, in this study the researcher tries to identify the relationship between media use and a set of political attitudes. In doing this, two main sets of attitudes are identified. The first set consists of those attitudes towards politics and public affairs in general. Here I will focus on the notion of civic awareness. According to Wong and Shum (1996; also Wong, 1997), civic awareness can be considered as having three interrelated aspects – cognitive, attitudinal and behavioral. However, treating the concept this way will make it too broad for this research. So in this research civic awareness is restricted to the attitudinal aspect. Five components of civic awareness are identified by the researcher and included in the survey (internal and external efficacy, sense of civic duty, recognition of political right, and political interests). However, we must not assume that the public also recognizes and differentiates different attitudes as researchers do. Thus in the actual analysis we have to examine the respondents' answers to determine the reliability and validity of the attitudinal constructs.

The second set of attitudes consists of the public's evaluations of and attitudes towards more particular and concrete political institutions. Since election is the subject here, the public's attitudes towards three particular institutions – the government, the political parties, the election itself – are included (In Chapter 7, the

reasons behind the identification of the attitudes and their operationalization will be discussed in more details).

Past research has provided evidence for the relationship between media use and civic awareness and the effects of civic awareness on voting behavior are also widely demonstrated. It has been pointed out that media have the potential to influence people's attitudes towards political institutions, especially when media coverage of a particular institution is largely positive or negative. Thus civic awareness and attitudes towards political institutions can be two sets of factors intervening the effects of media on turnout.

However, there is the problem of the casual direction. Does media use lead to change in attitudes? Or is media use just a result or an indicator of one's attitudes?

The right answer seems to be: both ways are possible. A more detailed discussion would be given in Chapter 7. Here suffice it to say that, in this study, in view of the lack of adequate data and because the relationships between media use and many attitudes can be interpreted in both ways, conclusive casual direction would not be available.

Media use leading to increase in knowledge about public affairs is what every person would expect. More important and interesting questions are the conditions under which people can learn information, and the effects of knowledge on political attitudes and voter turnout. Research on the knowledge-gap phenomena have shown that people with different socio-economic statuses can learn information from the media at different rate, producing a gap in the amount of knowledge between groups of people (Gaziano and Gaziano, 1996). But instead of using education or socio-economic statuses as the basis to differentiate people into groups, this research will utilize the concept of political sophistication, defined as the existence of a more developed knowledge structure which can help the reception, storage and retrieval of information. We can expect that different people with different levels of sophistication would learn about information at different rates.

The importance of knowledge and sophistication goes beyond simple learning as they also lead to or mediate changes in political attitudes and behaviors. On the one hand, the knowledge learned may have effects on people's attitudes. If the information given in an election campaign about a particular political object is one-sidedly positive or negative, it is very likely to lead to changes in people's attitudes towards the direction suggested by the coverage. Also, sophistication is likely to mediate the relationships between a person's political attitudes and other characteristics. For instance, Sniderman *et al.* (1991) has argued that sophisticated people are more likely to take the cognitive route in formulating opinions and attitudes, a proposition that will be tested in this study also.

Beside the content of knowledge, the state of knowing something may also have effects on one's political attitudes and behavior. The feeling of being knowledgeable, which one can gain from learning about news, is likely to make one more confident, and become more interested and involved in politics. Thus, it is probably that knowledgeable people are more likely to go out to vote. Then, knowledge would become another intervening variable mediating media effects on voter turnout.

The normative implications of effects

The notion of activating informed participation leads us to expect media to have positive effects on attitudes, knowledge, and ultimately, voter turnout, but what are the possible normative implications of media effects? It has been pointed out that there are restrictions of factuality, objectivity and autonomy regarding media's role to activate the public. In the specific context of Hong Kong there may also be other constraints. Generally speaking, media are not, and should not be, propaganda machines for the government. They have to criticize any political institutions if something actually go wrong. For instance, in the 1998 LegCo election various parties had intra-party cleavages. It is possible that media coverage of the cleavages

would have negative impacts on public's sense of efficacy or their evaluations of the political parties. However, it is absurd to argue that the media should not report the facts because they need to foster positive attitudes among the public.

It should also be reminded that there were controversies about the legitimacy of the 1998 LegCo election itself. Chapter 2 has mentioned several criticisms towards the election. In general, the LegCo election as a whole is not completely democratic. Thus it may raise the question of whether the media should encourage participation. Of course, as the present research is focused on the direct election of the geographical constituencies, the legitimacy question is not large, at least in a relative sense. It can also be pointed out that the direct election is participated by virtually all major political groups, including the democrats, in Hong Kong, thus the legitimacy of the election is widely, if not unreservedly, accepted by the elites. Moreover, the focus of the research is on the development of political participation, and even the election is not totally just, the development of a participatory culture remains important and desirable. Actually, before the election there were also calls for "blank voting," i.e., voters should express their support for democratic elections by going out to vote, but show their discontent with the undemocratic character of the whole LegCo election by a blank vote.

But if there are people who are still skeptical about the legitimacy of the election, then we must ask some questions in interpreting effects. If media have positive effects on attitudes and turnout, is it because media reported the election in a meaningful and substantial way, or because media have served as the mouthpiece of the government? If media have negative effects, then is it because the media rightly pointed out the gloomy side of the election, or because the media covered the election in a trivialized way that discouraged participation?

These questions are the key to tackle the normative implications of empirically found effects. And they call for the study of media content. Chapter 1 has pointed out that it is not feasible for the author to provide a comprehensive content analysis in

this study. Therefore, in providing a brief yet systematic analysis of media coverage of the election, a focus is needed so that we can get the most and best cues about the answers of the above questions.

There are two principles in choosing the focus of analyzing media content. First, the analysis should be able to show something that is continually and largely present in media coverage of the whole election campaign. In other words, as argued in Chapter 3 media effects are not likely to be the result of particular contents. It is more likely to be the result of the way media report the election in a general sense. Second, as the direct empirical linkage between the content analysis and effects is lacking in this study, it will help if past research findings have shown the linkage between the content attributes analyzed and effects discovered.

With these principles in mind, media "strategic coverage" of the election is chosen as the focus of the content analysis. It has often been noted that election coverage in the US is marked by the focus on the horse-race and the strategy aspect of the election (Patterson, 1980; 1994; Cappella and Jamieson, 1997; Joslyn, 1984; Cavanaugh, 1995). Candidates and parties campaign strategies are being focused on. And more than that, journalists tend to interpret candidates' and parties' actions and issue positions in terms of their strategic concerns. When journalists write election stories, they tend to use the language of games, sports, wars, and other kinds of contests. When things are put into this perspective, all actions by candidates, parties and other institutions would be explained by only one principle – the pursuit of self-interest. As a result,

strategic coverage may, in other words, invite the attribution of cynical motives to political actors in campaigns and public policy debates, not because voters are distanced from the process but precisely because they are drawn into it and, through a rational analysis of the politicians whose motives they have come to know, reject the actors and ultimately the process (Cappella and Jamieson, 1997, p.37).

Strategic coverage is also related to how media inform the public. No one can

deny that the media do provide information to the public. The problem is only whether the media have provided enough and important information to the public. The difference between reports on strategies and issues are important. Patterson (1980) stated that "a large portion of election coverage is devoted to the campaign's contestual aspects and says little about which candidate would make the better president" (p.6). Over the years, there were researchers echoing Patterson's view about media coverage of election (Patterson, 1994; Leovy, 1994). Ramsdei (1996) stated that we should establish what the media should cover in elections by asking what democracy requires. According to his analysis, elections are instruments to communicate popular preferences. Elections,

produce a mandate where the victorious candidate can claim that his positions on the issues have been endorsed by the electorate. To the extent that elections do exist to communicate popular preferences or mandate, it is difficult to see how such preferences could be based on anything but the issues.....Not only do elections serve to communicate a preference, they also exist to render judgments on past government performance. Again, the presumption is that judgments will be based on a government's past policies (p.75).

Ramsdei (1996) did not argue that media should report only issues. Candidates' personalities, past performances and backgrounds, and even poll information, are all useful for the voters. However, Ramsdei emphasized that the main focus and the really substantive part in the election should still be policy issues, followed by past records, and then others.

Thus, a further advantage in choosing strategic coverage as the concern is that its normative undesirability is clearer than simply negative coverage.

Of course, not all theorists would completely agree with Patterson and Ramsdei (Carminas and Kuklinski, 1990; Fiorina, 1990)¹⁵. But it should be safe to argue that

¹⁵ Following the Downsian logic, it seems that we should not expect too much from the public. Even though the normative theory of democracy may require informed citizens, we also have to take into account the fact that citizens have many other things in their more immediate daily lives to consider. Thus, Graber argued that other theorists who attack the media as not informative are asking for too much. She pointed out that too much issue analysis may only bore the public and turn them away

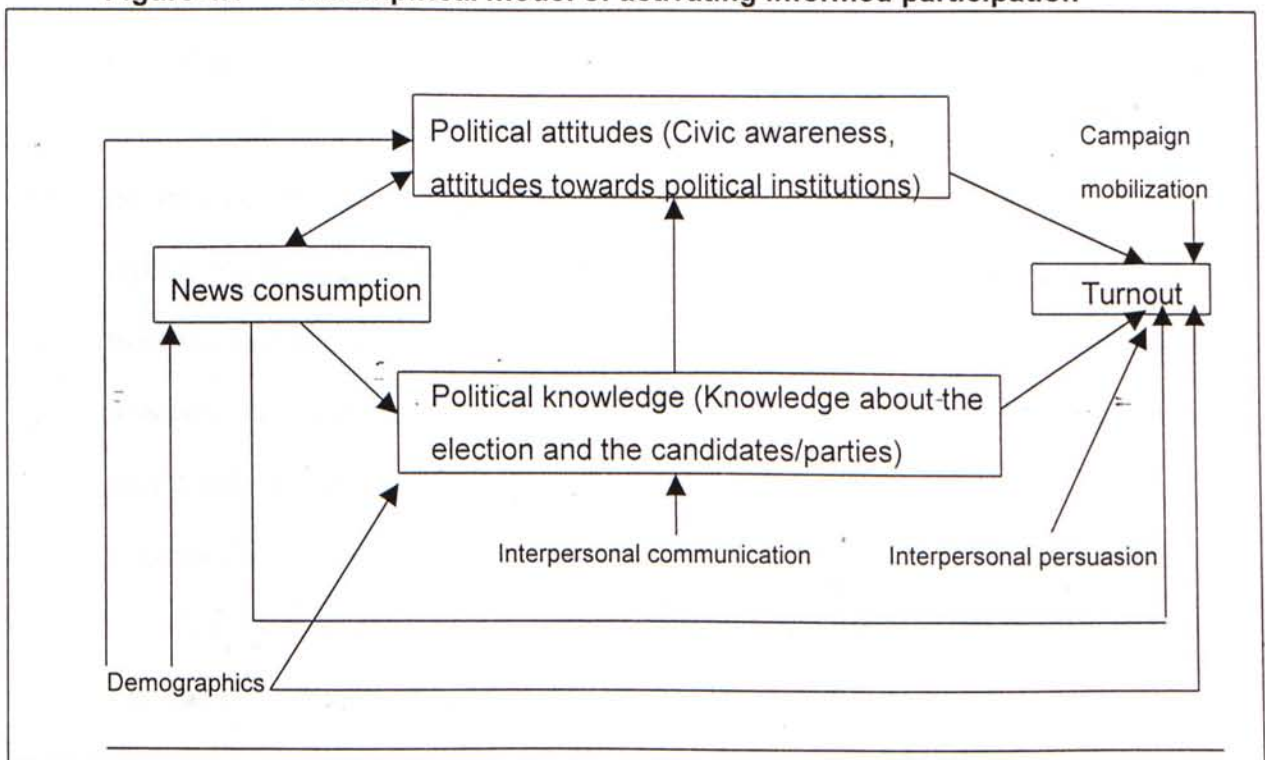
media, in covering the election, should not put too much emphasis on its strategic aspects. They should not portray the election only as a game participated by selfish actors without significance to the public, thus constructing the role of the public as spectators (Edelman, 1988).

On the whole, there is a normative expectation for media coverage to focus more on substantive issue information, though other types of information are also needed. And as strategic coverage is one of the most conspicuous aspects of media election coverage and one of the most prominent concerns among researchers, analyzing the phenomenon will help us interpret the effects found.

Research questions and hypotheses

Now, let me summarize the above arguments and state the research questions and general hypotheses. The media are expected to exert effects on turnout through affecting people's attitudes, including civic awareness and attitudes towards political institutions, and knowledge, as represented in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 An empirical model of activating informed participation



(Graber, 1994a). In another article (Graber, 1994b), she gave evidence that the US national survey showed a majority feeling that media had already provided enough information for them, and "if average voters feel well served by the election information supply, who is to say that they are wrong?" (p.114)

The figure consists of two sets of variables. The diagram shows the major variables within the theoretical framework of activating informed participation.

Media consumption is placed on the left end of the diagram while voter turnout is placed on the right hand side. This placement reflects that media consumption is the main independent variable focused on in this research, it does not necessarily mean that it is theoretically prior to attitudes in the casual chain.

General hypotheses are represented by the arrows in the diagram. However, discussion of specific hypotheses would require more detailed discussions of the conceptualization and operationalization of the variables, thus they will be stated only when the actual analysis part begins.

The one-way arrows in the diagram represent one-way casual relationship. Knowledge is assumed to be affected by news media consumption but not to exert influence on news media consumption. It would affect attitudes but attitudes can only affect knowledge indirectly. Voter turnout is assumed to be a final decision made by the respondents and is affected by the various factors. The arrow linking news media consumption and voter turnout represents the effects of media exerted directly on voter turnout, as well as indirect effects intervened by factors other than the two in the middle of the diagram. The two-way arrow between media and attitudes represents that the variables can affect each other. Resolving the relative strength of the casual relationships would require the use of sophisticated methods that are not available in this research. As a result, the problem of mutual casual relationship would not be solved in this research. This problem will be further discussed in Chapter 7.

The question of learning from the media, as well as how sophistication mediates the learning process will be discussed in Chapter 6.

Past research usually studied the relationships between news consumption and

interest, duty, and efficacy separately. However, there is a lack of research concerning the relationship between news consumption and various political attitudes at the same time. Moreover, the function of knowledge and sophistication as a factor underlying attitude change has aroused more and more concern in recent years (Zaller, 1992; Mutz *et al.*, 1996). In Chapter 7, we will see how news consumption and knowledge are related to various attitudes, and how these relationships differ according to levels of sophistication.

When we focus on turnout in Chapter 8, the question will be how news consumption, knowledge, attitudes and other variables explain turnout. The focus will be on the direct and indirect effects of news consumption and knowledge on turnout. News consumption is assumed to be leading to turnout through cognitive or affective route, while the cognitive route is mediated by knowledge, the affective route is mediated to a less extent by the existing variables in the framework and thus a direct relationship between turnout and news consumption may result.

In analyzing media effects, the recent development of cognitive psychological approach will play a very important role. The concept of sophistication, and its relationships with various phenomena, provide one basic underlying dimension in the analysis. Incorporating political sophistication as a variable in the analysis can help us to understand better the relationships among the variables in the diagram. It is expected that sophisticated and non-sophisticated people differ in political judgment making and decision making. Thus, different people's attitudes and behavior are likely to be explained by different things. In methodological terms, the role of sophistication is to add a number of hypotheses about interaction effects into the analysis. For instance, there may be interaction effects of media use and sophistication on knowledge and attitudes (see Chapter 6 and 7)¹⁶.

In the diagram there are also some other variables included. Demographic

¹⁶ To visualize how sophistication will be used a number of arrows can be drawn from the variable to the arrows linkage the other variables in the diagram. But it would make the diagram difficult to read and

variables are antecedents to media use, attitudes and knowledge etc. As in other research, demographic variables are controlled in the data analysis. Campaign mobilization will be added in the final voter turnout model.

Interpersonal communication is certainly important in the political communication process. From the two-step flow model (Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1955), through the spiral of silence hypothesis (Noelle-Neuman, 1984), to recent notions like impersonal influence (Mutz, 1998) and contextual influence (Huckfeldt and Sprague, 1995), researchers have tried to explicate the complex relationships between mass communication, interpersonal communication, and political opinions and attitudes, including questions like transmission of social and mass media's influence, perception of societal opinions, choice of discussants etc. But it would be impossible to study interpersonal communication comprehensively in this research. Therefore, interpersonal communication is taken into account in the analysis in two ways. A measure of interpersonal communication is used in Chapter 6 in explaining political knowledge because it can shed light on the question of learning from the media. And a measure in interpersonal persuasion is added in the turnout model.

Media content will be studied for helping us to understand the reasons behind and the implications of media effects. Qualitative analysis will be used, which will focus on the strategic coverage of the election by the media. It will tell us about how media construct election stories out of the information they have. The analysis of newspapers coverage of the election will be given in Chapter 9.

V. Design and methods

Survey

Most of the analysis in this research will utilize a survey data set collected in the election. The survey aims at understanding the relationships of people's news media use and their political attitudes, knowledge and voter turnout. The ultimate goal is to find out whether news media have effects on the voters in the 1998 LegCo election.

The limitation and distribution of available resources make it impossible to have the ideal research design with before and after surveys and parallel content analysis. As a result, a cross-sectional survey was conducted from March 11 to March 24, two months before the election day. The survey was conducted using the Computer Assisting Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system with a group of trained undergraduate students as interviewers.

Trained students were employed for carrying out systematic sampling of telephone numbers from the updated residential telephone directories of Hong Kong. A total of 1993 telephone numbers were selected by the procedure. In order to include the telephone numbers that may not be listed in the telephone directories, new numbers are generated by adding a constant of 2, 4 and 6 respectively to the last digit of every number. So there were finally 7972 phone numbers in the sample. These numbers were saved in a database, from which the CATI system randomly selects numbers for each interviewer on any given day during the interviewing period. After the two-week period, the total number of successful interviews were 1226. Dividing the number by the total of refusals and successful interviews yields a response rate of 43%¹⁷.

The survey provides the basis for most of the analysis in this research.

¹⁷ A response rate of 43% is not considerably lower than similar research in US, which usually have response rates of over 70%. However, due to the nascent development of opinion polls in Hong Kong and the public's general reluctance to spend time to answer pollsters questions, especially on sensitive topics like politics, in Hong Kong response rate about 50% is the norm.

Questions about people's media use, political attitudes, knowledge, intention to vote and past voting record, demographics etc. were asked (see Appendix B for the questionnaire).

A second follow-up survey was carried out from June 1 to 10, one week after the election. The survey was conducted by another group of trained interviewers using the same CATI system. Respondents in the March survey who are registered voters were the target respondents in June¹⁸. Of the 904 target respondents, 556 respondents were classified as truly having completed both the March and June surveys. Thus the panel attrition rate was a little bit less than 40%. As there is a period of more than two months separating the two waves and we had only ten days to finish the second wave survey, the attrition rate is reasonably good.

A few remarks should be added. The design here is different from most voting studies in the past in Hong Kong which utilized a cross-sectional survey carried out after the election, by telephone or home visits. In this research I am using a two-wave panel survey so that there are time differences among the answers collected in the two study. However, limited resources make repetition of all the questions infeasible and thus complete before and after comparison is absent. In addition, when questions asked in one single survey fall in the general domain of the LegCo election, as Zaller (1992) points out, some questions might prime the respondents to answer other questions in a certain way. But in this study, questions were asked separately in March and June. The measurement items in March survey have to be very well designed, or else random errors will set in, reducing the power of statistical tests that involve variables measured in two different waves.

However, these problems, if viewed in another perspective, are also advantages. When voter turnout is asked after the election and other variables

¹⁸ In Hong Kong an eligible voter has to register before s/he can actually vote. The Hong Kong government has spent a lot of resources in late 1997 and early 1998 for a registration campaign. Though the campaign was only able to attract 250 thousands previously unregistered voters to register,

before the election, the relationship between turnout and the predictive variables can be free from two challenges. The first is the idea of priming within the questionnaire as mentioned. That is, people tend to rationalize their turnout behavior and thus giving coherent answers that fit the researcher's expectations. The second is the possibility that the act of voting may have effects on people's political attitudes. It is especially plausible in Hong Kong as it only has direct elections for less than ten years, and voting for most people is not a life-long habit. Thus it is possible that the act of voting will enhance people's sense of efficacy and political interests, especially if the candidates they vote for win in the election. Note that this argument is relevant to the empirical model of media effects set up in the previous chapter. It points to the addition of an arrow from voter turnout to attitudes. In other words, an advantage in the present design is that the effects of attitudes and media use on voter turnout can be established with more confidence due to the absence of the effects of turnout on attitudes and media use.

The author does not intend to argue that the present design is necessarily better than a single cross-sectional post-election survey. But the time difference between the March survey and June follow-up makes the design being able to provide a precious opportunity to look at the relationship between people's turnout decision and various attitudinal and behavioral characteristics in a different way.

Content Analysis

A content analysis is carried out aiming at supplementing the media effect study. The scope of the analysis has to be restricted to a reasonable size that the author can handle. Thus content analysis has included analysis of newspaper news. Radio news and TV news are excluded because they are usually short in length and thus carry relatively far less information than the newspapers.

the total number of registered voters was added to about 2.8 millions, estimated to be around 70% of all the eligible voters in Hong Kong.

Also, the research can only include a limited number of newspapers in the analysis. Since the media environment surrounding the Hong Kong people and the provision of information are the focus, I decided to include only *Ming Pao* and *Apple Daily*. Other newspapers are excluded since they are not expected to differ widely in terms of informative-ness and style of coverage. As this research is not on the political stands of newspapers, it would not be necessary to include newspapers with different political stands, like leftist newspapers¹⁹. About informative-ness a more relevant distinction is mass/elite newspaper. *Ming Pao*, in this regard, belongs to elite newspaper, and *Apple Daily* belongs to the mass category. In the analysis all news in the front section is included. The analysis included the period of the 16 weeks before the election (including the election day), that is, from February 2 to May 24. The analysis of media coverage will be mainly qualitative. The aim is to see how media have covered the election, especially regarding the notion of strategic coverage. Specific techniques used in the analysis will be discussed in Chapter 9.

Operationalization of variables

The operationalization of the key variables involved in the analysis will be discussed in various chapters when the variables come into the analysis. A more detailed discussion of some operationalization and statistical procedures are given in Appendix A.

¹⁹ It is not to deny the importance of the leftist papers in Hong Kong. Actually, how the leftist papers cover Hong Kong election has often been a special concern for researchers and political actors. There is also potential influence of the leftist papers on common people. However, in this study the concern is the main channels through which common people know about politics. It is a fact that leftist papers have the smallest readership among all newspapers in Hong Kong. If Hong Kong people ever know what the leftist papers say, it is usually because other media cover what the leftist papers say. Thus, in order to determine what normal citizens are exposed to during the election period, leftist papers are left out.

VI. News consumption, knowledge, and sophistication

From this chapter on I will start to analysis the data collected in the surveys. It begins with an analysis of the relationship between news consumption, political knowledge and political sophistication. By giving information to the public, the media can contribute to both the quantity and quality of political participation. People who know more are more likely to vote since they are more involved and feel confident in dealing with political matters. And the quality of their choice is better if they are informed as their vote is likely to be a result of evaluating and counterbalancing different information rather than a random choice.

Limitation in the research design make it impossible to study the type and amount of information that voters have in mind when they formulate their voting decisions. Knowledge questions are only asked in March and at that time, which is before the most important campaign period, it is difficult to separate different kinds of information empirically, as will be shown later. Nevertheless, from the March survey we can get an idea of media effects on political knowledge gain in general. And the results are believed to apply in the latter stages of the election to a large extent.

Besides the normative desirability of being informed, empirical theories also suggest that knowledge would play an important role in the mechanisms of media effects. With the rise of the cognitive information processing approach to the study of political communication in recent years (McGraw, 1996), information and sophistication have become more and more important. Following this approach, the three important components in this chapter – news consumption, information, and sophistication, will play important roles in analysis in later chapters. This chapter will discuss how the three are conceptualized and measured. And the effects of news consumption and sophistication on knowledge will be analyzed and discussed.

As noted in previous discussions, media use will be differentiated into attention and exposure. Exposure to media is defined as the amount of time spent consuming media content, in this case, newscasts on radio, television and newspapers. Attention is defined as the amount of mental effort paid when they are exposed to the content (Drew and Weaver, 1990; Chaffee and Schleuder, 1986; McLeod *et al.*, 1988). Past research has shown that attention and exposure are responsible for different effects. In general, exposure is responsible for cognitive effects while attention is responsible for cognitive and attitudinal effects (Drew and Weaver, 1990). In this study, the aim is not to compare the differences between attention and exposure to news media. Both are taken into account so that the amount and scope of media effects on knowledge, attitudes, and turnout can be captured more completely.

Three questions are asked in the questionnaire requiring respondents to estimate the time they exposed daily to radio news, TV news, and newspaper. If the respondents have non-zero exposure to a particular medium, a second question will ask them to estimate the amount of attention they paid when during exposure by a Likert scale. Table 6.1 shows the results of the factor analysis including the six variables testing whether media exposure and attention are distinct dimensions in media use.

Table 6.1 supports the distinction between attention and exposure as two dimensions of news media consumption. Thus in the following analysis two variables are created. News attention is created by taking the mean of the three medium-attention variables, and news exposure is created by adding the three medium-exposure variables together (For more details on variable construction here and thereafter, please see Appendix A).

Table 6.1 Factor analysis on differences between attention and exposure

Pattern matrix of oblique rotation			
	Attention	Exposure	Communality
TV attention	0.87		0.75
Newspaper attention	0.85		0.73
Radio attention	0.88		0.76
TV exposure		0.74	0.54
Newspaper exposure		0.67	0.48
Radio exposure		0.73	0.51
% of var. accounted	40.4%	22.4%	
Eigenvalue	2.42	1.34	
Factor correlation			
Exposure	0.26		

From Table 6.1 we can also see that the attention variables have larger factor loadings and communalities than the exposure variables. In fact, the three attention variables have a reliability of 0.84 while the three exposure variables only have a reliability of 0.38. This difference is not surprising as exposure to a particular medium is dependent upon factors unrelated to one's attitudes about politics, news and media. These factors include working routine, habits, and the routines and habits of people's family members. Thus, exposure to one medium may not be strongly related to exposure to another. However, attention to news should be to a large extent related to one's attitudes like the perceived utility of and interest in political news. Thus attention to news in one medium should be correlated strongly to attention to news in another.

Methodologically, the results of the factor analysis and the reliability analysis imply that, although the constructed news exposure measure has a very high level of face validity and has attained construct validity in the factor analysis, it is not a very reliable measure. In fact, the problem of the reliability of media exposure and attention variables has been pointed out by some researchers. Some even attribute the failure of effect research to this unreliability problem (Bartels, 1993; Zaller, 1996). Zaller (1996) even argued for abandoning media exposure and attention as predictive variables in media effects research. However, the present author believes

that media researchers studying media effects on individuals must take Zaller's advice with caution, as Miller and Krosnick (1996) noted. When other variables (knowledge in Zaller's case) are used to replace media use, reliability is gained only by sacrificing face validity.

By taking into account both exposure and attention the relationship between news consumption and other variables can be explored to a fuller extent. Nevertheless, the difference in reliability in the attention and exposure measures makes comparison between them problematic. The difference between the effects of exposure and attention as shown in later analysis would be partially due to the difference in the reliability of the two measures. No conclusive results about the differences in effects of the two dimensions of media use could be drawn.

News consumption and knowledge

When Zaller argued for abandoning media exposure and attention in favor of a measure of news reception, which is actually a measure of factual knowledge, he did give a more important theoretical reason supporting his claim besides the methodological point. The argument is that media effects on attitudes and evaluations could exist only after a person's exposing to the media, receiving the information, interpreting it and incorporating it into existing knowledge structure. In some cases, the retrieval of information is also important in judgment making (Zaller and Price, 1990). Thus, the problem of media exposure and attention is that they only capture a beginning stage in information processing. And Zaller (1996) argues that factual knowledge can be used as a measure of the actual reception of information.

I agree on the importance of knowledge and the cognitive route of media effects. However, as just mentioned, I also believe that media variables should not be excluded from empirical analysis. They are the actual object of study which communication researchers are focusing on. Besides, including media variables allow us to look at possible non-cognitive effects. Last but not least, the relationship

between news consumption and learning should not be taken for granted. It is true that media exposure does not entail reception of information, but this discrepancy between exposure and reception is just the intriguing question for communication researchers: who can learn what from the media under what kinds of conditions?

Communication researchers have focused on the notion of knowledge-gap for more than two decades (Gaziano and Gaziano, 1996). In its original formulation, people with higher levels of socio-economic status, especially those with higher levels of education, are more likely to gain knowledge from the media. In the case of political knowledge, most researchers agree that most people do not have much direct experience of politics, most of the time what they get are second-hand information from the mass media (Lau and Erber, 1985). To understand news from the media, one's level of sophistication would be important. Broadly defined, political sophistication (or political expertise as some political psychologists would call) refers to a person's ability to make sense of political matters, processing political information and making political judgments. More specifically, political sophistication has been conceptualized and operationalized in a number of ways. It may conceptually refer to a person's level of abstraction in thinking about politics (Converse, 1964; 1975), or a person's level of cognitive complexity (Schroder *et al.*, 1967; Tetlock, 1983), or the existence of schema – a knowledge structure – about political information (Lau and Erber, 1985; Hamill and Lodge, 1986). In the literature of political psychology, a large number of indicators have been used, including education, political interest, media use, pure knowledge, or a mixture of them (McGraw and Pinney, 1990; Sniderman *et al.*, 1991; Fiske *et al.*, 1990; McGraw and Hubbard, 1996; Funk, 1997; Hsu and Price, 1993; the method of operationalization of the concept in this research will be discussed soon).

The implication of this literature is that while media are important in informing the public about the elections and other political matters, more sophisticated people are more likely to receive the information from the media than the non-sophisticated

people. It is because the sophisticated people have better developed knowledge structures and higher levels of ability to draw connections between pieces of information with the knowledge they already have. In other words, sophistication can facilitate learning from the media.

We have posited that sophisticated people have a higher ability of learning, but learn about what? Can we differentiate different kinds of knowledge? Two particular research ideas are relevant here. First, researchers in US usually differentiate knowledge in an election into issue knowledge and strategy knowledge, and the two kinds of knowledge are different not only empirically but also different in their normative desirability. This is what researchers interested in media performance in elections usually focus on. Second, researchers familiar with cognitive psychology have developed and tested the notion of domain-specific knowledge (Iyengar, 1990; Price and Zaller, 1993). That is, common people do not know much about all types of knowledge but they focus on different domains, and become knowledgeable about particular domains though remaining rather ignorant about other matters²⁰.

In the survey in March in this study, 24 questions about various domains of public affairs are asked. The original design is that the 24 questions can be broken down into six groups, four questions are about politician-party matching, four about party backgrounds and past performance, four about current campaign strategies, four about party issue stands, four about facts about the election, and four about general public affairs. However, reliability analysis shows that only party-politician matching questions attain a reliability coefficient higher than 0.60. Two other groups, party background and general public affairs, attain reliability coefficients of higher than 0.55. The remaining three groups of questions have reliability coefficients of

²⁰ Theoretically, the notion of domain-specificity is related to the notion of cognitive heuristics (Iyengar, 1990). Following the argument of Downs on rational choice, people will not spend too much resource on dealing with political matters. However, it does not mean that citizens are totally irrational, rather, they are having bounded rationality. They will use various heuristics, or short-cuts, to minimize the costs involved in making a decision. And the final decision they make will not be perfectly rational, but still being rational to a considerable extent.

0.34 to 0.46 only²¹. The implication is that there seems to be no clear knowledge domains existing at the time the survey was conducted. Thus, in the following analysis, a single knowledge measure with the 24 items added together will be used (Cronbach's alpha = 0.86).

Measuring sophistication

Among the large number of methods used in past research to operationalize sophistication as mentioned earlier, pure factual knowledge is becoming the most widely used one. However, these indicators, including factual knowledge, though fare well in empirical analysis, do not capture a very important aspect of sophistication. Sophistication does not refer only to the amount of knowledge acquired, but also the way knowledge is processed and structured. Using factual knowledge to represent sophistication would present two problems in this study. First, factual knowledge is used to represent knowledge per se, and it is also one of the dependent variables to be explained, thus some other indicators of sophistication must be found. Second, factual knowledge does not capture the conceptual meaning of sophistication completely. Thus, when one uses factual knowledge as indicator, the results could be interpreted meaningfully even if the concept of sophistication is not used.

In this study, the author follows the argument made by Tetlock (1983) and Schroder *et al.* (1967) about cognitive complexity. A person is said to be cognitively

²¹ The differences in the reliability of the questions are probably the result of three factors. The first is the recent-ness of the knowledge involved. It is probably not a coincident that the two groups of knowledge items with the highest level of reliability are about background information, while the items on the information and knowledge only recently available attain very low levels of reliability. It points to the possibility that learning a particular piece of new information would contain a certain level of randomness. However, in the long run, people who are knowledgeable would tend to learn the knowledge and information about the same domain as well, and people who are less knowledgeable may remain ignorant about other information in the same domain, or even forget the information learnt. In this case the reliability of background information items would become higher. A second factor is the salience of the information. Due to the timing of the survey, information about the election, party campaign strategies and issue stands remain to be covered sporadically by the media. They are usually put into the inner pages of newspapers or as later items in TV and radio news. However, items used in public affairs knowledge are more salient. Further, in terms of question design some knowledge items give choices for the respondents to choose while others not. For the multiple choice questions, some respondents may guess, thus increasing the randomness in being able to answer the questions. These are only possible factors, further research would be needed to study the existence and development of knowledge domains.

complex if s/he demonstrates a high level of differentiation and a high level of integration in thinking. Level of differentiation refers to the ability of a person to differentiate different stimuli. In other words, in the political realm the level of differentiation would be related to the ability of an individual to recognize the differences between concepts, groups and issues etc. Level of integration, on the other hand, refers to the ability of an individual to combine and connect separate objects. In other words, it is the ability of an individual to see the connection between different political positions, concepts etc. Of course, a complete measure that includes one's level of differentiation and integration would be almost impossible in a survey. Thus in this study an index is created to represent the respondents' level of differentiation mainly, basically referring to how well the respondents can recognize political parties' relative positions on two dimensions – economic issues and democratization. These two dimensions are chosen because they represent the major lines of cleavages in Hong Kong politics (Li, 1997). Bivariate correlation analysis shows that the measure of level of differentiation is related to knowledge at a reasonable level (Pearson $r = 0.62$). The correlation is strong as the theory of sophistication would predict, but it is not overwhelming (otherwise, the analysis of the antecedents of knowledge will be meaningless after including level of differentiation).

Hypotheses and results

It has already been pointed out that news consumption and sophistication would affect knowledge levels in three ways. Three hypotheses can be stated as follows:

- H6.1: News consumption, as the source from which most common people derive most of their political knowledge, will lead to higher levels of knowledge.
- H6.2: A person's levels of sophistication, by facilitating various cognitive processes of information processing including interpreting and comprehending information, as well as storage and retrieval, will lead to higher levels of knowledge.
- H6.3: Combining the arguments in the knowledge-gap literature and

sophistication theory, it is expected that the interaction between sophistication and news consumption will be positively related to higher levels of knowledge.

To get a better understanding about how media inform the public, interpersonal communication is also included. Interpersonal communication is also a channel for information (Huckfeldt and Sprague, 1995; Huckfeldt, 1987). In the survey, respondents were asked whether they often, sometimes, rarely or never discuss politics and public affairs with friends or relatives. The point of interests here is the interaction between sophistication and interpersonal communication. Interpersonal communication has several characteristics. First, it is not primarily a channel for information acquisition but a channel for opinion expression and exchange. Thus it is expected that this kind of communication has less powerful informing effects. However, in interpersonal communication, people can specifically ask for the particular information they want, thus it is more convenient and cost effective if people can find the "experts" around them (Huckfeldt and Sprague, 1991). Third, interpersonal communication is two-way and the content of communication is more flexible than the case in mass communication. It implies that, while lack of the necessary background knowledge or schema to understand a particular piece of information may hinder information acquisition from the mass media, a person engaging in interpersonal communication can ask for the materials and guidance to comprehend a particular piece of information. Thus it can be expected that the knowledge-gap phenomenon that exist in mass communication would not exist in the case of interpersonal communication. Two hypotheses can be stated as follows:

- H6.4: People with higher levels of interpersonal discussions are more knowledgeable about politics and public affairs. However, the effects of interpersonal discussions on knowledge would be lower than the effects of mass communication.
- H6.5: Contrary to the situation of mass media consumption, there will not be an interaction effect between interpersonal discussions and political sophistication.

To test the hypotheses, a regression analysis is run with the knowledge measure as the dependent variable. The independent variables, including demographics and political interest as controlling variables, are separated into five blocks and entered into the model.

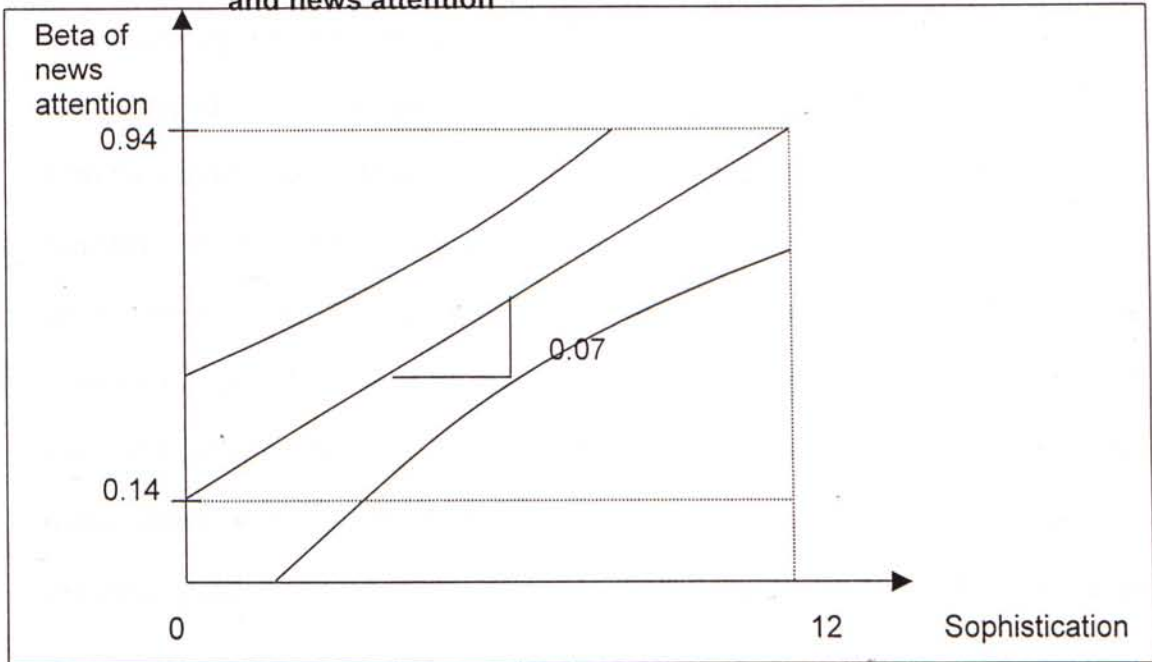
Table 6.2 Regression analysis on media and sophistication effects on knowledge

	Partial model	Main effect only model	Final model
<i>Demographics (1)</i> $\Delta R^2 = 18.7\%^{***}$			
<i>Political interests</i> Political interests $\Delta R^2 = 4.9\%^{***}$			
	0.13***	0.05*	0.05*
<i>Communication channels</i> News attention News exposure Interpersonal discussion $\Delta R^2 = 8.0\%^{***}$			
	0.20***	0.13***	0.14***
	0.10***	0.07**	0.07**
	0.12***	0.08***	0.08***
<i>Sophistication</i> Level of sophistication $\Delta R^2 = 16.5\%^{***}$			
		0.46***	0.46***
<i>Interactions</i> Level of sophistication X attention Level of sophistication X exposure Level of sophistication X int. discussion $\Delta R^2 = 0.9\%^{***}$			
			0.07**
			0.05*
			0.01
Number of cases	1220	1220	1220
Percentage of variance accounted for	31.7%***	48.2%***	49.0%***
Levels of sophistication			
Contingent effects of (2)	Minimum (score = 0)	Maximum (score = 12)	
News attention	0.14	0.94	
News exposure	0.07	0.61	
Interpersonal discussion	0.08	0.15	
Notes:			
1. Demographics included family income, personal income, education, age and sex. Their regression coefficients are not shown for simplicity. ΔR^2 is obtained at the stage of the variables in that bloc were entered and the betas are from the final equation in which all the variables in the corresponding model have been entered.			
2. Calculated from the final model by beta of communication variable + the level of sophistication score X beta of the interaction variable.			
* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$			

From the results we can see that the hypotheses set out earlier are all supported. Before level of sophistication and the interaction variables are added, the three communication variables are significantly related to knowledge, with news attention having the largest effects. After level of sophistication and the interaction variables (See Appendix A for their construction) are added, the beta of all three communication variables decreased, but all remained significant. Level of sophistication is strongly related to knowledge. Also, the addition of the interaction variables did lead to a significant, though not large, increase in the explanatory power of the model. As expected, the two interactions between sophistication and mass communication attain statistical significance but that between interpersonal and mass communication does not.

The results show that media are an important channel for political information. However, the effect sizes differ for people with different levels of sophistication. As the sophistication index ranges from 0 to 12, we can calculate the effect sizes for different people (shown at the bottom of Table 6.2). For the least sophisticated people the effect sizes of communication variables are 0.14 for attention, 0.07 for exposure, and 0.08 for interpersonal discussion, but for the most sophisticated the effect sizes are 0.94, 0.61 and 0.15 respectively. These findings are illustrated in Figure 6.1. The figure indicates that as the sophistication score increases by one unit, the effects of news attention increases by 0.07 in terms of standardized regression coefficient. The two curved lines indicate the margin of error of the regression coefficient. On the whole, the interaction effects of sophistication with news attention and exposure mean that even people from the least sophisticated group do learn some information from the media, it is the most sophisticated people who can learn the largest amount of information from the media.

Figure 6.1 An illustration for the interaction effects between sophistication and news attention



Finally, the overall explanatory power of the model is very good indeed. Even before sophistication and interaction variables are added, the model can already explain more than 30% of the total variance in the dependent variable. The full model can explain nearly half of the total variance involved in the knowledge variable. The explanatory power is better than many studies on similar topics. For instance, the six regression models derived from six different surveys in Zhao and Chaffee's (1995) study on campaign advertisements and TV news effects on knowledge have shown R square values between 27.1% to 29.5%. Rhee and Cappella's (1997) experimental study, analyzing sophistication and media effects on three types of information recall, have resulted in R square values between 5% to 20%. The comparatively higher explanatory power in the present study is probably due to the high reliability of the knowledge measure.

Discussion

What this chapter has accomplished is to conceptualize and explain three very important concepts that will continue to operate in later chapters. News consumption

is shown to consist of two dimensions – attention and exposure. The relationship between news consumption, sophistication and political knowledge is also discussed and analyzed. On the whole, it is shown that people do learn political information from the media, but sophistication is shown to be a contingent condition that would facilitate learning from the media. More interestingly, this knowledge-gap phenomenon does not exist in the case of learning from interpersonal communication. This knowledge-gap phenomenon is partly related to the particular ways of media handling and reporting of news. In the case of US, Graber (1994b) has argued that media should bear at least part of the blame for the ignorance of the American public as shown in opinion polls (Delli Carpini and Keeter, 1992) because media coverage of political news is often in the episodic frame (Iyengar, 1991) without background information. News stories are also usually told with unfamiliar words and phrases. In the case of Hong Kong, the media should pay attention to the question that whether their coverage is easily comprehensible for the larger public. If normal news reporting cannot achieve that, then other kinds of public affairs programming may be important. Of course, during the election the media also organized different kinds of programs like candidate debates and special documentaries. Newspapers also have special editions and pages devoted to coverage of election. Whether these actions are enough and helpful are not directly assessable here, but future research in the performance of media in Hong Kong election may focus on the differences between the informative-ness of different media programs and genres.

Besides the findings, two basic arguments forwarded in this chapter are important. First, media can be meaningfully conceptualized as one of the most important components of the information environment people reside. Second, it is believed that the relationship between various factors can be analyzed more meaningfully if the contingent conditions under which these relationships exist are taken into account.

When using the knowledge, sophistication and media use variables in the following analysis, especially in the turnout model in Chapter 8, certain assumptions are made. Level of sophistication is assumed to be a relatively stable attribute of an individual. Knowledge level is also assumed to be relatively stable overtime, as past research shown that background knowledge as measured in a previous survey is almost always the strongest predictor of knowledge at later times.

Of course, it becomes more problematic to argue that news consumption is stable. Especially in the case of election, the salience of the event may cause normally inattentive and unexposed people to pay much more attention and time to consume news. However, in the June survey we ask the respondents whether they have increased or decreased their exposure and attention to election news in particular during the campaign period (i.e., between March and June). The results are that 59% of respondents said that they did not change their levels of exposure and 40% of respondents reported no change in levels of attention. The proportions of respondents reported a little bit increase in exposure and attention are 37% and 54% respectively. In other words, the proportions of respondents reported either no change or increase a little in their news consumption during the campaign are over 95% for both the question of exposure and that of attention (see Appendix B). Thus the respondents in general did not think they have changed much in the amount of news consumption they have during the campaign. Although ideally it is still better to take into account the changes of news consumption as reported in June, but the technical problem of how to combine the variables measured in March and June is daunting. Thus in this study the news consumption variables measured in March remain to be the most effective and efficient ones for us to analyze the data.

VII. Media and political attitudes

In this chapter the relationship between media and political attitudes will be analyzed. The aim is to see whether media use is related to various political attitudes, which are in turn potentially related to voter turnout. At the normative level, there can be different expectations regarding the relationship between media and different attitudes. If it is controversial in arguing that the media should foster positive attitudes towards the government, the parties and the elections, it is less controversial in saying that the media should lead to a higher sense of civic duty and higher levels of political interest. Of course, it does not mean that the relationship between media use and attitudes towards political institutions is not related to the normative aspect, it only means that whether their relationships are desirable is a more complicated question and it must be answered with reference to the media coverage and the actual behaviors of the political actors.

Refer to the diagram in Chapter 4, in the previous chapter the arrow linking media and knowledge is tackled with the introduction of sophistication into the whole picture. This chapter will study the linkages between media and attitudes, and that between knowledge and attitudes.

Two practical issues in the study of media-attitudes relationship

The relationship between media consumption and political attitudes has been the focus of political communication research since the years of Lazarsfeld and his colleagues. Two general problems, which have been briefly discussed in Chapter 4, are important. First, what are attitudes? Conceptually an attitude may be defined as "a general and relatively enduring evaluation of some person (including oneself), group, object, or issue" (Petty *et al.*, 1994, p.70). However, used in a broad way, it is often difficult to clearly differentiate attitude with similar concepts like beliefs, values,

opinions, evaluations etc. A cursory survey of the political communication and political science literature shows that attitude may sometimes be referred to basic democratic values like political tolerance (Bobo and Licari, 1989), to certain beliefs that is related to the notion of civic awareness like sense of efficacy (Cappella and Jamieson, 1997), to opinions and preferences for policy issues (Converse, 1964; Wyckoff, 1984), or to evaluations of and feelings towards particular objects like groups (Zinni *et al.*, 1997).

For the purpose of the present research I do not intend to give a clear conceptual discussion and definition of attitudes. Instead, attitude will be used as a general term including three more specific sets of variables. The first group is civic awareness and it includes the general beliefs and predispositions that a democratic citizen is supposed to have. It is supposed to include concepts like sense of efficacy and sense of duty etc. However, the actual component of civic awareness will be determined by analyzing the data, as will be shown later. It should be noted that this group of attitudes is more general as they reflect a person's self-concept as a citizen and his/her relationship with politics in general. They will be related to a wider range of political attitudes and behaviors. The second group is the attitudes towards three major political institutions in an election: 1) The government, which is responsible for organizing and conducting the election, 2) The political parties, which field candidates in the election, and 3) election itself. Of course, attitude towards one particular institution can be broken down further conceptually. However, for the sake of simplicity a composite index would represent respondents' attitudes towards one institution. These attitudes are more specific than civic awareness as they are referring to particular objects rather than politics in general. But they are still general in the sense that they are referring to more stable underlying attitudes towards those objects, rather than opinions or evaluations of specific aspects or performance of the objects on specific issues or in specific events. Thus it is conceptually different from the last group of attitudes, which is the performance evaluations of the institutions in

the election. They refer to the questions asked in the second-wave survey, which specifically asked the respondents to give scores for the three institutions involved about their performance in the election.

The second problem involved in the study of news consumption's relationship with political attitudes is the casual direction. Communication researchers are certainly more interested in how communication has caused the formation and change of attitudes. However, it is also obvious that attitudes can lead to differences in communication behavior. The most exemplary case perhaps is the relationship between political interests and media consumption. The two are so closely related to each other that political scientists not especially interested in media communication per se sometimes use media attention and exposure as indicators of political interests (Teixeira, 1992; 1987; Shum, 1996). And researchers who are interested in media effects often encounter difficulties in arguing for the directions of relationships (Norris, 1997; Chan, 1995). Methodologically there are two ways for solving problems of casual directions. The first is to utilize more advanced statistical analysis like the non-recursive regression model. However, the use of this technique requires one to recognize certain variables that are causes of media communication but not political interest, and variables that are causes of political interests but not media communication. The identification of these antecedent variables is extremely difficult, especially in the case of media-use-interest relationship.

Researchers may also use a panel survey to tackle the problem. By asking the same set of questions twice, temporal order between variables can be established. An example is Thomas Patterson's *The Mass Media Election*. However, a panel survey is costly, and it does not seem to eliminate the problem altogether.

Facing with this problem, the analysis that follows is mainly aimed at describing the relationship between various political attitudes and communication behavior. More certain casual claims could be established only in the analysis of the third group of attitudes, that is, evaluations of performance after the election. It is because

the temporal order between them has been established. In this chapter, after discussing how the attitude indices are operationalized, analysis of the pattern of relationship between attitudes, media use and knowledge will be conducted. As the previous chapter suggests, it will be meaningful to study whether different people exhibit different patterns of relationships between news consumption and attitudes. It will be shown that whether people with high and low levels of sophistication exhibit different patterns of relationships between the variables.

Civic awareness and attitudes towards political institutions measured

Both civic awareness and attitudes towards political institutions are measured in the March survey by multiple indicators. For civic awareness, respondents have to state whether they would agree or disagree with 14 statements by a 5-point scale. The statements are designed to include people's sense of duty, perception of political rights, sense of internal and external efficacies, and political interest. However, whether the respondents' answers fit into the original design is another matter.

The two statements about political interests are direct and explicit. They are stated as "I am interested in Hong Kong politics" and "I am interested in the upcoming election." They have a reliability coefficient of 0.59 and an index for political interests is derived simply by averaging the two. The other 12 statements are put into a factor analysis to search for underlying dimensions. Following some initial tests, statements with low communalities (< 0.4) and those split evenly across factors are removed from the model, resulting in Table 7.1. The results are somewhat different from the original design of the statements. The 9 remaining statements can be reduced to three factors. The first factor contains 3 statements about people's sense of efficacy. The next contains 3 statements about people's sense of duty and rights. The last factor also contains 3 statements. One particular commonality of those 3 statements is that they all explicitly mention political activities of one kind or another. Thus they are thought as representing attitudes towards political

participation. As in the case of political interests, the statements representing one particular construct are averaged. Therefore 4 variables about civic awareness are constructed. (See Appendix A for details).

Table 7.1 Factor analysis on civic awareness

Pattern matrix resulted from oblique rotation (only values over 0.30 are shown)				
	Sense of efficacy	Sense of rights and duty	Attitudes towards participation	Comm- unality
The Hong Kong government failed to respond to public opinion.	0.70			0.48
Common people cannot grasp Hong Kong politics.	0.68			0.48
Hong Kong people have no influence on government policies.	0.76			0.58
Citizens have rights to express their own opinions through different means.		0.58	0.30	0.51
Every citizen has the duty to obey the law.		0.68		0.50
Unless it would affect my interests, I have no need to go out to vote.	0.31	0.65		0.50
Participating in public affairs is the duty of citizens.			0.68	0.53
Voting is an effective mean to express opinions to the government.			0.71	0.56
A citizen has the right to participate in politics.			0.61	0.44
% of variance accounted for	21.6%	18.1%	11.4%	
Eigenvalue	1.94	1.63	1.03	
Correlation among factors				
Sense of rights and duty	0.02			
Attitudes towards participation	0.17	-0.01		

A particular note about the civic awareness variables is that they generally have low reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha for political interest = 0.59, for sense of efficacy = 0.54, for sense of duty and rights = 0.36, attitudes towards political participation = 0.42). This means that they are actually not very powerful indicators of their respective concepts, but they are the best estimate that can be derived.

For attitudes towards political institutions, respondents were asked to state whether they agree with 20 statements or not using a 5-point scale. The statements are designed to capture various possible dimensions and aspects of citizen's attitudes towards the institutions. In the factor analysis, statements with communalities lower than 0.40 and those split across various factors are removed.

Table 7.2 shows the results.

Table 7.2 Factor analysis on attitudes towards political institutions

Pattern matrix resulted from oblique rotation (only values over 0.30 are shown)				
	<u>Attitudes towards</u>			
	Election	Government	Parties	Communality
1	0.83			0.67
2	0.68			0.46
3	0.61			0.50
4	0.80			0.63
5	0.58			0.48
6		0.65		0.43
7		0.65		0.47
8		0.62		0.48
9		0.64		0.44
10		0.64		0.49
11		0.62		0.41
12			0.63	0.40
13			0.75	0.59
14			0.75	0.56
% of variance accounted for	26.5%	12.7%	10.9%	
Eigenvalue	3.77	1.71	1.52	
Correlations among factors				
Attitudes towards government	0.25			
Attitudes towards parties	0.10	0.15		

1. The LegCo election in May would be very important for the general development in HK
2. Election is closely related to people's lives.
3. The LegCo election in May is helpful to Hong Kong democratization.
4. The election in May is very important to the political development in Hong Kong.
5. The election in May would boost the confidence of Hong Kong people.
6. The degree of democracy and freedom that the SAR government is giving the HK people is satisfactory.
7. The SAR government is efficient in handling livelihood issues.
8. Hong Kong people should trust the SAR government.
9. Hong Kong government fails to effectively solve Hong Kong's social problems
10. The SAR government is a government really ruled by Hong Kong people.
11. The Hong Kong government is not a democratic government.
12. Hong Kong's political parties would change their stands in order to gain votes.
13. Election is a venue for politicians to strive for fame and interests, it is meaningless to common people.
14. Hong Kong's political parties would only respect public opinion at election times.

Three sets of statements cluster around three underlying factors. The first factor consists of 5 statements about citizens' attitude towards the election. The second consists of 6 statements about attitude towards the government and the third consists of 3 statements about attitude towards the parties and candidates. Different from the case of civic awareness, the components of the factors in this case have generally higher reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha for attitudes towards government = 0.72, for attitudes towards the election = 0.78, for attitudes towards the parties = 0.55). The indices are constructed by calculating the means of the answers to relevant statements (See appendix A for details).

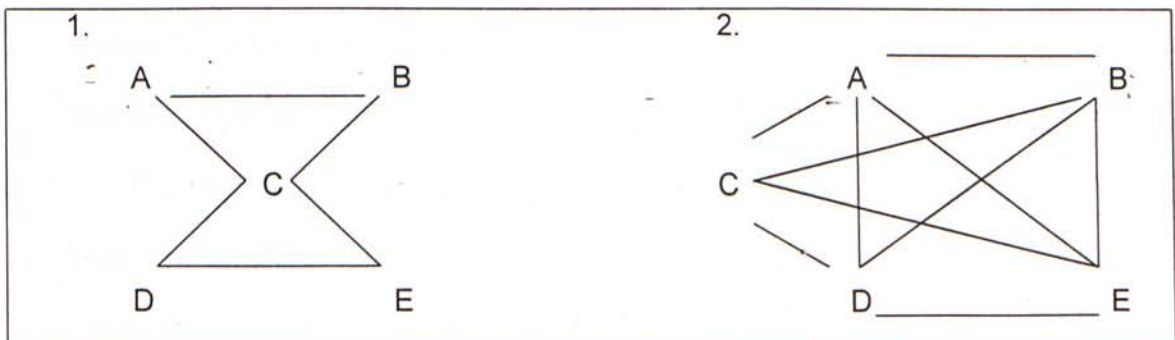
Attitude structure and constraint

In studying the relationships between news consumption, knowledge and attitudes the question is more than what attitudes the heavy media users are holding versus the light consumer. As we can expect the various political attitudes to be related to one another, bivariate analysis of relationships between news consumption and political attitudes may give rise to a lot of significant, but possibly spurious, correlations. Before going to the analysis, some discussions of the basic ideas underlying the analysis will be useful.

Philip Converse, in his discussion about the American public's political thinking, has developed the concept of attitude structure (1964; 1975; Campbell *et al.*, 1960), which refers to the pattern of relationships among a set of policy attitudes. The attitudes are structured in the sense that when one of the attitudes changes, some of the others would also change. In Converse's terminologies, there are constraints present in the relationships among the attitudes. Besides, some attitudes would be more central than the others, i.e., changing some attitudes would affect the whole configuration of the attitude structure to a larger extent than changing others. In Converse's formulation, the attitudes are defined by the political elite to be related to each other in a particular way. It results in sets of connected issue positions representing different ideologies, namely, liberalism and conservatism in the American society.

Borrowing this idea, the objective of the analysis in the following sections is to show the "structural constraints" of the political attitudes involved in this study. We can expect the various political attitudes and civic awareness components to be closely related. However, it is not likely that all attitudes will be directly related to each other. Imagine that we are studying the inter-relationships between 5 attitudes. There are numerous possible patterns of relationship among them. The following diagram shows two of the possibilities.

Figure 7.1 Two possible patterns of interrelationships between 5 attitudes



Assuming that the five attitudes are related to each other at the bivariate level, after they control for each other, different patterns can emerge. In Pattern 1 there is a

variable C at the "center," as it is related directly to the other four variables. The other four variables, however, are directly related to C and another one variable only. In Pattern 2, all five variables are directly related to each other. To repeat, the idea of constraint is that changing one attitude will lead to changes in the others. However, how these constraints work and to what extent attitudes are constrained by others would depend on the patterns of relationship. In Pattern 2 above, changing any one variable will directly lead to changes in others. In pattern 1, however, only changing attitude C will have the same effect, changing another attitude, such as A, would lead to change in D and E only through the mediation of C. Besides, the amount of constraint also depends on the strength of the relationships among the attitudes, which the above diagram does not show. If the relationships among the variables are stronger, then the constraint is larger.

In the above diagram, if a sixth variable, which is media use, is added into the analysis, we can see whether the structure among the attitudinal variables would change and whether and to what extent media use is related to various attitudinal variables. Using this method to analyze the relationship among attitudes and media use would simplify the interpretation. By viewing the relationship between attitudes and media use as forming a pattern, the important thing is not the individual linkages among the variables but the overall pattern. Also, as casual analysis is impossible due to the design, how news consumption and knowledge are directly or indirectly related to which of the political attitudes would only provide suggestions for the possible, if not actual, effects of news consumption and knowledge.

It is important to note that there are important differences between the analysis here and Converse's original idea. While Converse is concerning with how policy issue attitudes come together, this study is focusing on how civic awareness, attitudes towards political institutions and news consumption are related. Also, in Converse analysis there is a socially defined "correct" relationship between various attitudes. Thus, Converse starts with a "standard" attitude structure to examine

whether the attitude structure of the public comes close to it. However, in this study the author does not presume any correct relationship between various attitudes. Of course, there will be relationships that are easier to interpret than others. For instance, a significant direct relationship between sense of duty and rights and attitudes towards political participation would be more intuitive than a direct relationship between sense of duty and rights and attitudes towards political parties. But there is no true or false, right or wrong in any relationship among the attitudes.

Questions are results

Unlike the previous chapter, it is difficult to state very specific hypotheses in this section. Instead, the major questions can be stated as follows:

- Q7.1: In what ways and to what extent the various political attitudes and civic awareness variables are related to one another? Would some of the relationships at the bivariate level disappear at the multivariate level?
- Q7.2: What would be the pattern of relationship after adding media use and knowledge? What kinds of relationships exist between media use and knowledge variables and the attitudinal variables? What are the differences between the bivariate level analysis and multivariate level analysis of media-attitudes relationships?

In Figure 4.1 I have pointed out that media consumption and political attitudes can affect each other. The available data do not allow specification of the casual direction. Thus, bivariate and partial correlation analyses are conducted. The results are shown in Table 7.3 to 7.4.

In the tables the upper-right corners show results of bivariate correlations. As would be expected, the attitudinal variables are largely correlated with each other in zero-order analysis. In Table 7.3 only one of the 21 bivariate correlation coefficients are insignificant. Also, all the relationships are positive, showing that the set of political attitudes is, on the whole, reinforcing each other.

Table 7.3 Correlations among political attitudes

	Interest	Duty	Participate.	Efficacy	Att. gov.	Att. par.	Att. elect.
Interest	-----	.18*** (1170)	.31*** (1164)	.17*** (1153)	.16*** (1132)	.16*** (1108)	.32*** (1120)
Duty	.11*** (1152)	-----	.22*** (1173)	.10*** (1163)	.02 (1142)	.11*** (1117)	.06* (1131)
Participate.	.19*** (1146)	.18*** (1155)	-----	.10*** (1160)	.08** (1134)	.11*** (1112)	.35*** (1123)
Efficacy	.08** (1135)	.03 (1145)	.00 (1142)	-----	.29*** (1125)	.29** (1103)	.18*** (1113)
Att. gov.	.02 (1114)	.00 (1124)	-.04 (1116)	.26*** (1107)	-----	.09** (1150)	.32*** (1165)
Att. par.	.08** (1091)	.04 (1100)	.00 (1095)	.23*** (1096)	-.01 (1133)	-----	.18*** (1144)
Att. elect.	.19*** (1103)	-.03 (1114)	.28*** (1106)	.05^ (1086)	.23*** (1148)	.13*** (1127)	-----

Notes:

Cell entries are correlation coefficients and sample size. The upper-right half of the table shows zero-order results, the lower-left half shows partial correlation results. In partial correlation of two variables, all other variables in the table and five demographics variables are controlled.

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$; ^ $p < 0.10$

Table 7.4 shows that the media and knowledge variables have different relationships with political attitudes. News exposure is related to only three of the attitudinal variables in the bivariate analyses: it is positively correlated with political interests and attitudes towards participation, but negatively correlated with attitudes towards parties (but the correlation coefficient is weak). News attention shows a more interesting pattern. It is correlated with all the four civic awareness variables but only with one of the three attitudes towards political institutions in the bivariate analyses. Actually, zero-order results, especially its strong relationship with political interests, explain why media attention is sometimes used as an indicator of political involvement or interests: it is connected to a person's civic awareness in general. Knowledge, in the bivariate analyses, has demonstrated correlations with political interest, sense of duty, attitudes towards participation, and attitudes towards the government.

Table 7.4 Correlations among media use, knowledge and political attitudes

	NE.	NA.	Know	Interest	Duty	Participate.	Efficacy	Att. gov.	Att. par.	Att. elect.
NE.	-----	.31*** (1226)	.23*** (1226)	.16*** (1173)	.03 (1185)	.10*** (1177)	-.05^ (1166)	-.02 (1180)	-.07* (1153)	.04 (1167)
NA.	.21*** (1205)	-----	.37*** (1226)	.36*** (1173)	.14*** (1185)	.13*** (1177)	.07* (1166)	.03 (1180)	-.01 (1153)	.09** (1167)
Know	.12*** (1205)	.23*** (1205)	-----	.26*** (1173)	.22*** (1185)	.13*** (1177)	-.00 (1166)	-.13*** (1180)	.05 (1153)	-.02 (1167)
Interest	.03 (1152)	.24*** (1152)	.14*** (1152)	-----	.18*** (1170)	.31*** (1164)	.17*** (1153)	.16*** (1132)	.16*** (1108)	.32*** (1120)
Duty	-.03 (1164)	.04 (1164)	.12*** (1164)	.07* (1149)	-----	.22*** (1173)	.10*** (1163)	.02 (1142)	.11*** (1117)	.06* (1131)
Participate	.06* (1156)	-.02 (1156)	.04 (1156)	.17*** (1143)	.17*** (1152)	-----	.10*** (1160)	.08** (1134)	.11*** (1112)	.35*** (1123)
Efficacy	-.04 (1145)	.05^ (1145)	-.03 (1145)	.07* (1132)	.03 (1142)	.01 (1139)	-----	.29*** (1125)	.29** (1103)	.18*** (1113)
Att. gov.	-.03 (1159)	.00 (1159)	-.12*** (1159)	.04 (1111)	.02 (1121)	-.04 (1113)	.26*** (1104)	-----	.09** (1150)	.32*** (1165)
Att. par.	-.05^ (1133)	-.06* (1133)	.04 (1133)	.09** (1088)	.03 (1097)	.00 (1092)	.23** (1083)	-.00 (1130)	-----	.18*** (1144)
Att. elect.	-.02 (1147)	.02 (1147)	-.02 (1147)	.18*** (1100)	-.03 (1111)	.28*** (1103)	.05 (1093)	.22*** (1145)	.13*** (1124)	-----

Notes:

Cell entries are correlation coefficients and sample size. The upper-right half of the table shows results of bivariate correlation analysis, which actually contain replication of the results shown in Table 7.1. The other half table shows results of partial correlation analysis. When analyzing the partial correlation of two variables, all the other variables in the table, together with five demographics variables, are controlled.

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$; ^ $p < 0.10$

NA.: News attention

Know: Knowledge

Interest: Political interest

Duty: Sense of duty and rights

Participate: Attitudes towards participation

NE.: News exposure;

Efficacy: Sense of efficacy

Att. gov.: Attitudes towards the government

Att. par.: Attitudes towards the parties

Att. elect.: Attitudes towards the election

The more important part of the analysis is the partial correlations between the variables. As suggested earlier, when the variables are controlled for each other, the number of significant correlations would decrease substantially. In Table 7.3 the

number of insignificant relationships have increased from 1 to 10. In Table 7.4, a similar pattern appears. And most important, the number of significant relationships between news attention and exposure and other attitudinal variables have decreased to a large extent.

To have a better vision of the partial correlation analysis, results are summarized into Figure 7.2 and 7.3, from which we can visualize the “attitude structure” of our respondents. Significant relationships among variables are shown by linkages among variables and the thickness of the lines approximates the strength of correlations.

Figure 7.2 shows that at the multivariate level, attitudes are not related to each other in a pair-wise fashion. Instead, some attitudes appear to be more “central.” For instance, political interest is significantly related to 5 of the remaining 6 attitudinal variables. However, some attitudes are directly related to only a few of other attitudes, e.g, attitudes towards the government is only related to sense of efficacy and attitude towards the election.

Figure 7.2 Summary of relationships between political attitudes

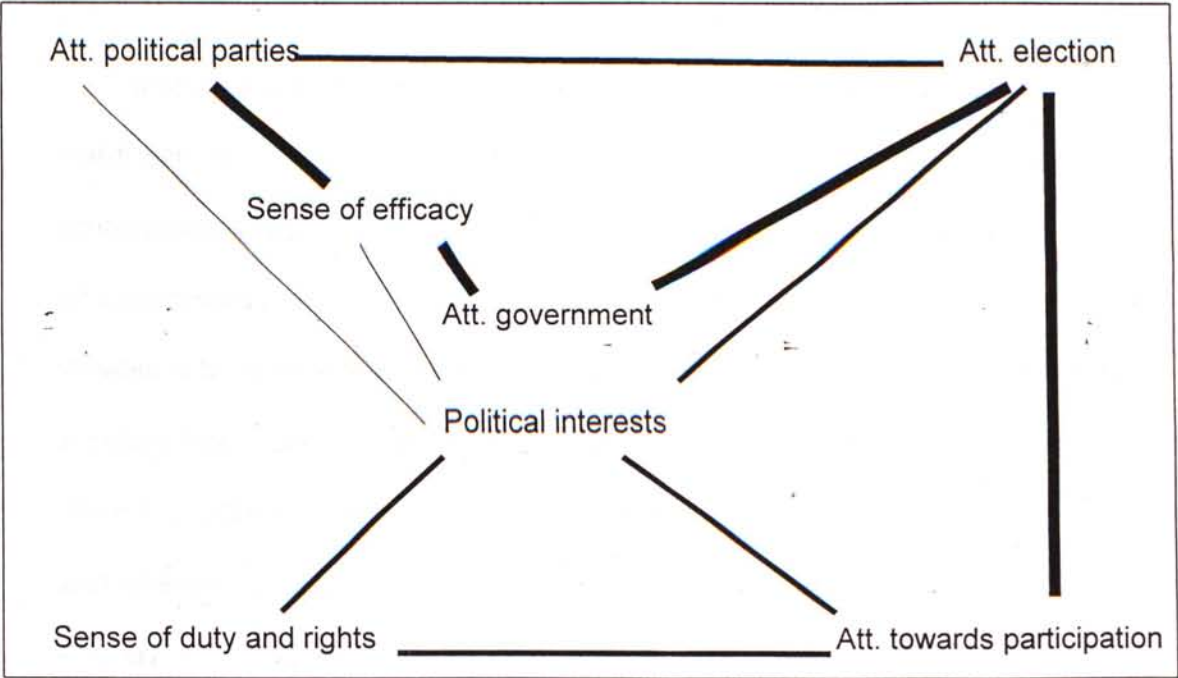
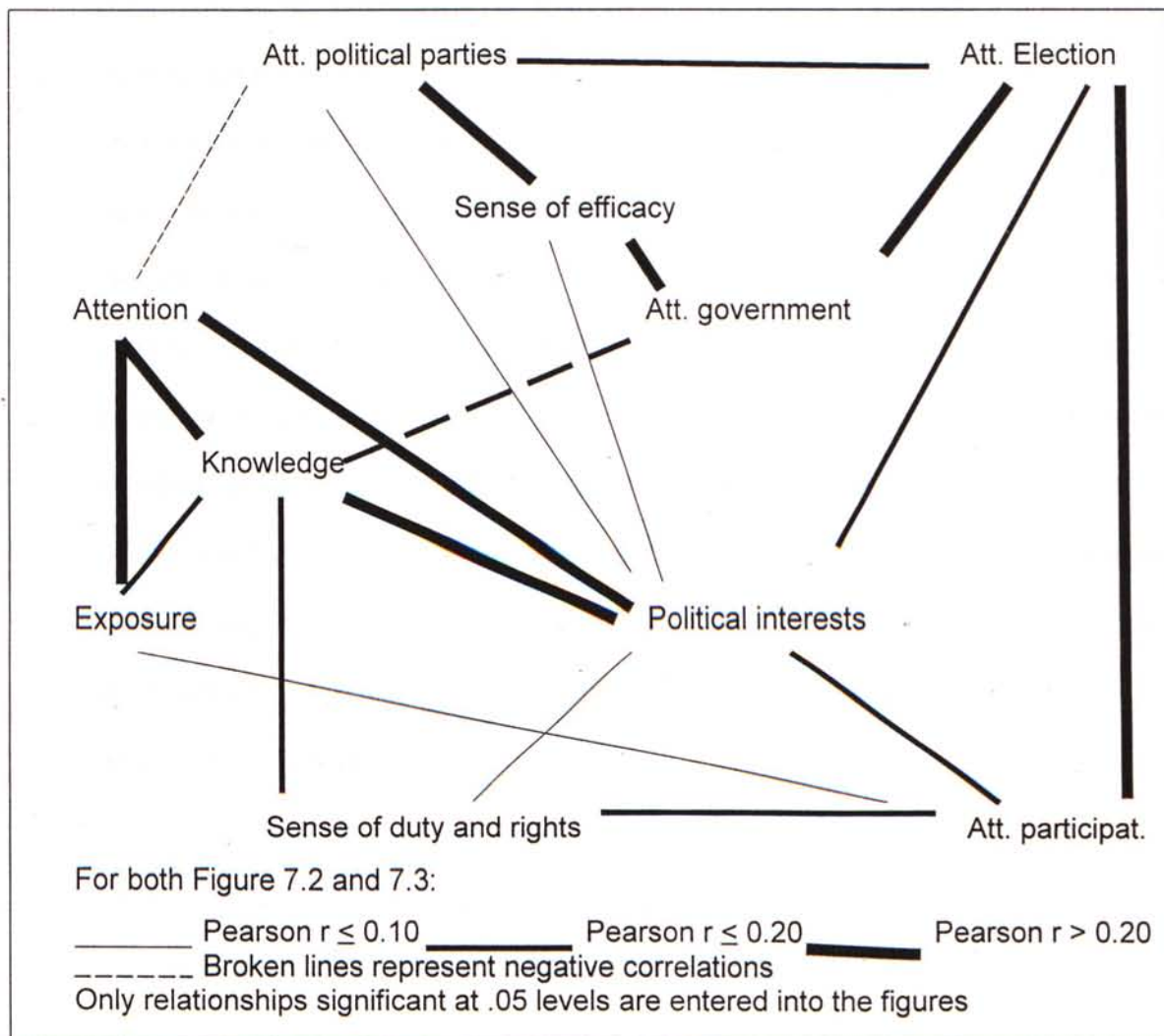


Figure 7.3 Summary of relationships between media use, knowledge, and political attitudes



Another advantage of putting the attitudinal variables into an overall structure is that it can help us to ascertain the meanings of the attitudinal variables in a more contextualized way. For instance, attitude towards participation is related to interest, attitude towards the election, and sense of duty and right only. It suggests that this variable is more related to a person's own sense of whether s/he wants to participate in public affairs, and it is less related to the political environment. Sense of efficacy is related to attitudes towards political parties and government besides its relationship with interest, it suggests that the measure of efficacy is mainly one of external efficacy, which is a person's sense of whether one's own opinions and efforts would count in the given political environment.

What is the situation after the news consumption variables and knowledge are added? From the figures we see that the significance of the relationships between various attitudes do not change (the correlation coefficients are adjusted, of course). All the links that exist in Figure 7.2 also exist in Figure 7.3, and no new relationship is added. For how the news consumption and knowledge variables are connected with the attitudinal variables, in Figure 7.3 news exposure is only directly related to attitudes towards political participation, and news attention is directly related positively to political interests and negatively to attitudes towards political parties only. In other words, while exposure has three significant correlations with political attitudes in bivariate analysis, it is reduced to one in the partial correlation analysis. News attention suffers a decrease from five to two. However, the explanatory power of knowledge largely survives the control, three out of the four significant bivariate relationships between knowledge and attitudes retain, though the correlation coefficients have decreased. In sum, it is positively related to political interests and sense of rights and duty, and negatively related to attitudes towards parties.

The results point to a conclusion that is consistent with what scholars in the West has argued: media use is not strongly related to a wide set of attitudes but knowledge emerges as an important variable in explaining media effects. Figure 7.3 has shown that news exposure and attention only have very limited relationship with attitudes at the multivariate level, but knowledge appears to be more powerful in shaping people's attitudes. For instance, comparing the effects of knowledge and news attention, it can be argued that though news attention is related to political interests more strongly, the casual direction of the relationship is largely unknown. However, as the previous chapter suggest, knowledge is likely to be a cause when it has direct relationships with attitudinal variables.

Regarding knowledge effects there are three points to be noted. First, as we assume that common people gain most of their political knowledge through the media, knowledge effects are to a large extent indirect effects flowing from the media.

Second, the knowledge variable used in the analysis refers to amount of knowledge only. Thus for the variable to have effects on attitudes, it means either the state of knowing something, i.e., the feeling of "I know I am knowledgeable," would have attitudinal effects, or the content of coverage induces attitude change. In the above analysis, the relationship between civic awareness and knowledge may be explained by both mechanisms, while the relationship between knowledge and attitudes towards institutions are more likely to be caused by the actual content. For news content to have effects on attitudes, like the negative effects on government, it requires that the content: 1) has enough elements related to the government, 2) the elements are largely negative, or at least capable of eliciting negative responses, to the government, and 3) the audience received the negative elements. From these arguments we can generate hypothesis about media content, however, as pointed out in previous chapters, it will be out of the scope of the present study.

Sophistication and media effects on attitudes

In the previous chapter we have tested the knowledge-gap phenomenon. Recent research has also shown that people with different levels of sophistication have different methods in processing information (Hsu and Price, 1993; Sniderman *et al.*, 1991; Rhee and Cappella, 1997; Tewksbury, 1999; Price *et al.*, 1997). There are various arguments put forward by scholars. Some argue that sophisticated people are more likely to take the cognitive route of judgment formation making rather than the affective route (Sniderman *et al.*, 1991). Others argue that sophisticated people are more likely to counteract media effects as they are more capable to re-interpret media messages (McGraw and Hubbard, 1996).

However, adopting the cognitive route in judgment means only taking information as an important basis of judgment. It does not entail relationships between amount of information and attitudes, since sophisticated people may have their own processes of interpretation and evaluation of information. Actually, whether

the amount of information and attitudes will be related in the two groups of people may differ case by case, considering the nature of the attitudes, the information about the attitude object available in the environment, and people's pre-existing attitudes etc. However, there is not enough space here to introduce and tackle all the complexities. On the whole, a general hypothesis, following the sophisticated people as cognitive heuristic users argument (Sniderman *et al.*, 1991), can be stated:

H7.1: More significant relationships between knowledge and attitudinal variables would exist for the sophisticated group rather than the non-sophisticated group.

Then what about the relationship between media consumption and political attitudes? When knowledge is controlled, it can be assumed that the relationship between news consumption and political attitudes is largely affective. A little discussion may be needed for the term "affect." Affect can be defined as "a generic term encompassing such things as feelings, moods, and emotions" (Conover and Feldman, 1986, p.51). Thus it is different from cognition, which involves the processing of knowledge, information and arguments. Affect and cognition are closely connected with each other. For instance, a person's interpretation of oneself's emotional states would involve cognitive processes, and a person's affect and cognition towards a particular object are correlated (Conover and Feldman, 1986). However, research also shows that a person's affect towards an object can exist without cognition, and affect can be in conflict with cognition (Markus and MacKuen, 1993; Granberg and Brown, 1989). In our case, it is possible for a person to watch a TV story about the election and end up knowing nothing about the election and candidates, but only feel that it is annoying or feel confident about the system.

Generally speaking, research has shown that taking affect into account can help explaining people's political attitudes (Markus and MacKuen, 1993; Conover and Feldman, 1986). But affect is not widely studied (Graber, 1996), mainly due to the fact the cognitive information theories are better developed, and the problems

involved in conceptualizing (whether affect can be summarized into like vs. dislike), and operationalizing affect. In the present case, the author accepts several arguments and assumptions from the social psychology literature. First, affect and cognition are distinct and affect can exist without or in conflict with cognition. Second, media are capable in producing affective as well as cognitive consequences. Third, affect towards objects like the election itself, the parties and candidates etc, would likely affect citizens' decision to vote. In the actual analysis in the following, it must be conceded that there is no particular variable devised to capture the "affect" of the respondents, and the so-called "affective consequences" of the media is largely a kind of residual explanation. That is, when the cognitive effects of the media are specified by knowledge, the remaining effects of the media variables are more likely to be largely affective in nature.

Back to the analysis, following Sniderman *et al.* (1991) it may be argued that media-attitudes relationships may be stronger in the low sophistication group, since they are the people who are more likely to rely on the affective route in judgment formation. Thus, a general hypothesis can be stated as follows:

H7.2: Media use and attitudes are likely to be related more strongly in the low sophistication group than the high sophistication group.

In testing the hypotheses, one complication involved is that sophisticated people have higher levels of knowledge than the non-sophisticated people. Thus in separating the two groups – sophisticated vs. non-sophisticated – a method is adopted so that the two groups do not differ largely in knowledge levels (see Appendix A). This prevents any conflation of knowledge and sophistication effects. Also, it prevents the situation that the amount of variance in the knowledge variable would be too small in the non-sophisticated group, which makes the comparison between the two groups invalid.

After dividing the two groups, a correlation analysis is conducted. Here we are only interested in the multivariate analysis after the media and knowledge variables

are added. The results are summarized in Table 7.5, and also Figure 7.4 and 7.5.

Table 7.5 Correlations among media use, knowledge and political attitudes for the two sophistication groups

	NE.	NA	Know	Interest	Duty	Particip- ate	Efficacy	Att. gov.	Att. par.	Att. elect.
NE	-----	.24*** (591)	.10* (591)	.01 (568)	-.02 (568)	.11** (567)	-.01 (561)	-.05 (576)	-.05 (571)	.02 (570)
NA	.18*** (599)	-----	.22*** (591)	.24*** (568)	.04 (568)	-.02 (567)	.04 (561)	.05 (576)	-.08* (571)	-.02 (570)
Know	.14*** (599)	.26*** (599)	-----	.16*** (568)	.20*** (568)	.00 (567)	-.00 (561)	-.14** * (573)	.08^ (568)	.00 (560)
Interest	.04 (569)	.24*** (569)	.13** (569)	-----	.06 (567)	.21*** (566)	.05 (560)	.03 (554)	.05 (550)	.19** (549)
Duty	-.04 (581)	.06 (581)	.03 (581)	.06 (567)	-----	.17*** (566)	.06 (560)	.00 (554)	-.00 (550)	.01 (550)
Particip- ate	.01 (574)	-.05 (574)	.08^ (574)	.12*** (562)	.18*** (571)	-----	-.03 (560)	.01 (553)	.04 (549)	.27*** (548)
Efficacy	-.06 (569)	.08^ (569)	-.06 (569)	.10* (557)	-.00 (567)	.05 (564)	-----	.23*** (547)	.22*** (543)	.07 (542)
Att. gov.	-.03 (568)	-.05 (568)	-.06 (564)	.09* (542)	.04 (552)	-.07^ (545)	.29*** (542)	-----	-.01 (570)	.25*** (570)
Att. par.	-.06 (547)	-.05 (547)	.02 (547)	.13** (523)	.07^ (532)	-.02 (528)	.23*** (525)	-.01 (560)	-----	.10* (567)
Att. elect.	.03 (562)	-.06 (562)	-.07 (5362)	.17*** (536)	-.06 (546)	.29*** (540)	.02 (536)	.19*** (545)	.16*** (542)	-----

Note:

Cell entries are correlation coefficients and sample size. The upper-right half of the table shows results for the high levels of sophistication group. The other half table shows results of for the low levels of sophistication group. When analyzing the partial correlation of two variables, all the other variables in the table, together with five demographics variables, are controlled.

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$; ^ $p < 0.10$

NA.: News attention

Know: Knowledge

Interest: Political interest

Duty: Sense of duty and rights

Participate: Attitudes towards participation

NE.: News exposure;

Efficacy: Sense of efficacy

Att. gov.: Attitudes towards the government

Att. par.: Attitudes towards the parties

Att. elect.: Attitudes towards the election

Figure 7.4

Summary of relationships – low sophistication group

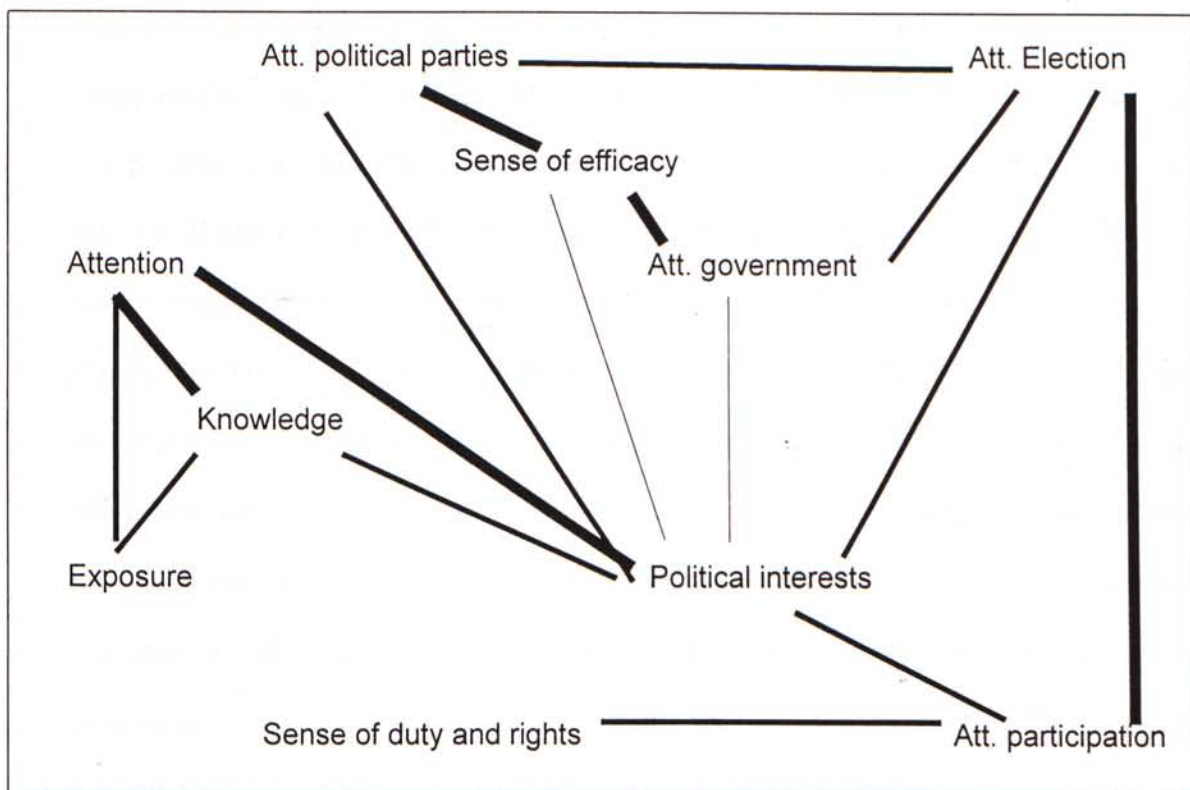
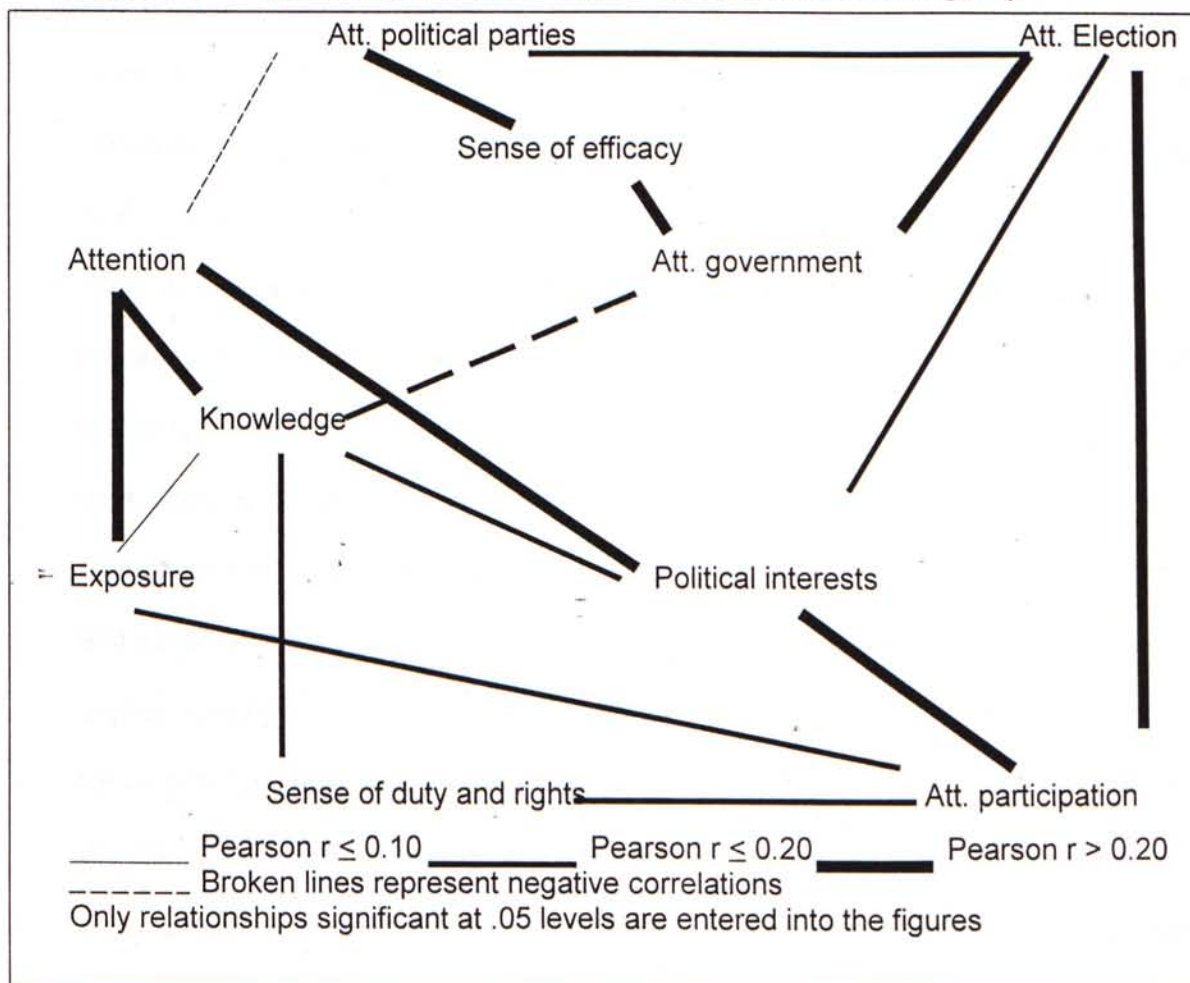


Figure 7.5

Summary of relationships – high sophistication group



From Figure 7.4 and 7.5 we can see that H7.1 is supported but H7.2 is not. For the low sophistication group, news consumption and knowledge has virtually no direct relationship with any attitudinal variables. The remaining relationships include the positive one between attention and interest, and that between knowledge and interest. If one compares Figure 7.4 with Figure 7.3, one may argue that the lack of direct relationships is due to the smaller sample size in the analysis resulting in Figure 7.4. However, even if the confidence level is pushed back to 0.10, only two direct relationships between the news consumption and knowledge variables and attitudinal variables will be added. They are the positive correlation between news attention and sense of efficacy, and that between knowledge and attitudes towards participation. In other words, if media have any effects on political attitudes, the effects will be mediated through political interests. Thus, it can be argued that media effects on political attitudes as shown in Figure 7.4 are very limited.

Different from the low sophistication group, for the high sophistication group news consumption and knowledge are related more closely to the attitudinal variables. Actually, all significant relationships between media/knowledge variables in Figure 7.3 are retained. Knowledge has retained its positive correlation with interests and sense of duty and rights, and its negative relationship with attitudes towards government. Actually, knowledge also demonstrates positive effects on attitudes towards parties which is significant at 0.10 level. One interesting point to note when comparing Figure 7.4 and 7.5 is that in the low sophistication group, political interest has retained its "central" position. It is related directly to five attitudinal variables, as well as with news attention and knowledge. However, for the sophisticated people interest is less powerful in explaining other attitudes. It can only retain direct relationships with two attitudinal variables. Whether we can characterize the lowly sophisticated people as interest-driven in their political outlook is a matter beyond the scope of the present research. But this question may have important implication in understanding Hong Kong people's political attitudes and behavior.

How can the failure of hypothesis 7.2 be explained, i.e., why news consumption variables demonstrate more and stronger relationships with attitudinal variables in the high sophistication group? First of all, it should be noted that the general argument about sophistication did not rule out the possibility that sophisticated people may utilize the affective route in attitude formation and judgment making, it only says that they use the cognitive route relatively more. In other words, Figure 7.5 – results for the sophistication group – is not directly contradictory to the argument. The question is why non-sophisticated people demonstrate no relationship between political attitudes and their news consumption. What could be suggested is that in the analysis the attitudes are more stable and general ones, rather than specific evaluations (like those that will be analyzed later). Non-sophisticated people may find it difficult to formulate these stable and general attitudes, no matter by the cognitive or the affective route. Further, the measures are taken in March, which is before the major campaign period. And before March media coverage did not pay an overwhelming attention to politics and elections. Thus, a possible reason behind the lack of media-consumption-attitude relationship for the non-sophisticated people is that they not only acquired very few cognitive elements but also very few affective elements about politics and political institutions from news coverage before the major campaign period.

Though the relationships in Figure 7.4 and 7.5 have no specified casual directions, but we can at least argue that if media have any effects on general attitudes of individuals, the effects are likely to be stronger in the case of high sophistication group. Then, does it mean that sophisticated people in Hong Kong are more passive and likely to subject to media influence? The answer is no. The argument here is that sophisticated people in Hong Kong are better user of information and media messages, so that when they do not feel the need to re-interpret political messages and information, they will use them to formulate their attitudes. In other words, the relationships between media/knowledge and various

attitudes can be called effects in the sense that attitude formation and change are partly originated from the media (of course, this is subject to the condition that we can ascertain the casual direction, which we cannot do here). But sophisticated people are not totally passive, the relationships are probably results of "audience negotiated influence" (McQuail, 1994). It is likely that only when the media messages are consistent with the pre-existing attitudes of the individuals, knowledge would have effects on people's evaluations of performance of political institutions.

Performance evaluations of political institutions

In the above sections the attitudes discussed are expected to be more general, the last group of attitudes, performance evaluations of political institutions in the election, is much more specific. In the conceptual sense these evaluations can only be formed during or after the election. Methodologically, the questions are asked in June, thus analysis about media and knowledge effects on performance evaluations can be ascertained with a higher degree of confidence.

Specifically, the respondents in June were asked to rate the performance of the government, four particular political parties, political parties and candidates in general, and the election by giving marks ranging from 0 to 10, with 10 representing excellent performance. Three performance evaluation variables, about government, parties and candidate, and election, are constructed (See Appendix A).

Two questions are important in the analysis. First, how are people's general attitudes, as measured in March, related to their performance evaluations in June? On the surface, it seems that people's general attitudes and performance evaluations should be related. But actually this is not necessarily the case. If people use a top-down route in judgment formation, that is, using generalized ideas and categories about the political institutions to formulate specific evaluations (Fiske *et al.*, 1991), then general attitudes and specific evaluations will be related with each other to a larger extent. However, people can also recognize the specificity of the context of

election and formulate performance evaluations of the institutions in the election anew by a bottom-up process, that is, they start with specific information and impressions collected within the election period and use that as the basis of judgment making. The present research, it should be conceded, cannot fully differentiate the two judgment-making processes, but following the discussion we can suppose that the kind of relationships between general attitudes (measured in March) and specific evaluations (measured in June) is related to the judgment making process undertaken.

In the case of the 1998 LegCo election, it seems that bottom-up processes of performance evaluations formation is more likely. It is because, without a long history of democratic government and election before, Hong Kong people are less likely than their Western counterparts to form deep rooted general beliefs about government and parties performance in democracy and election. Moreover, the 1998 election was a historically special event as it was the first post-handover election. This special character of the election made people more likely to see the election as a special context and formulate their specific evaluations by a bottom-up process²².

Thus, strong relationships between general attitudes and the evaluations are not expected. The only exceptional case is performance evaluations about the government. The government was primarily responsible for conducting the election and most of the controversies and works involved the government as the central actor happened before the major election campaign period. Right after the handover the government was involved in making the electoral rules and systems, and in late 1997 and early 1998 the government was actively promoting voter registration. Thus at the time of the first survey in March people would have received much information

²² Fiske (1986) summarizes that situations that are likely to give rise to bottom-up, or piecemeal, processing. In general,

piecemeal processing is favored when: (a) the judged object is category inconsistent; (b) the judged object is a collection of information that does not cue a category; (c) concrete, instance-oriented judgments are required; (d) the required judgment is novel; (e) the judgment is made at a leisurely pace; (f) the respondent's outcomes depend on the judgment; or (g) the respondent has a complex view of the judged object (p.51).

and impressions about government performance "in the election." Then, running into the campaign period media would turn their spotlights to the candidates and parties, thus what people received between March and June 1998 were information and impressions about the parties, candidates and the election itself mainly. Therefore, we can expect that people's attitudes towards government in March and their evaluations of government performance in June would be directly related, while people's attitudes towards parties and elections in March and their respective performance evaluations in June would be weakly, or even not, related.

Another question to be looked at here is the media and knowledge effects on performance evaluations. Following Zaller (1992), the author regards the knowledge variable as one showing indirect effects of media use. Two assumptions are made here. First, the knowledge level measured in March would be a valid indicator of people knowledge levels during the campaign period. Second, media remain the most important source of political knowledge for the citizens, thus if political knowledge has any effect on evaluations, a large part of the effect can be considered as the indirect effect of the media. Of course, whether relations would exist depends on factors like people's underlying attitudes and the configuration of the information environment. As within the campaign period the media are more likely to focus on the activities of the parties and candidates, knowledge is more likely to show effects on people's evaluation of parties than on the other two evaluations.

Hypotheses and results

The above discussions lead to hypotheses which can be restated as follow:

- H7.3: Among the three political institutions, general attitudes towards the government is most likely to be related to evaluation of its performance after the election.
- H7.4: Knowledge is more likely to have effects on people's evaluations of political parties and candidates rather than their evaluations of the other two political institutions.

To test the hypotheses regression models are constructed. When one evaluation variable is used as the dependent variable, the other two are controlled due to their likely correlations. These correlations would come from two factors. First, people who evaluate one major actor of the election positively are more likely to evaluate the election more positively. On the other hand, since the evaluation questions using an 11-point scale, different people may have different understanding of the scale and give answers clustering around different values.

When one evaluation variable is used, its corresponding attitude variable measured in March is included. Demographics and civic awareness are controlled. News attention, exposure and knowledge are included to test the hypotheses.

Table 7.6 shows the results of the analysis and we can see that the hypotheses are largely supported. Knowledge has a negative impact on parties performance evaluation. It is consistent with the argument that media coverage inside the campaign period was largely focusing on the parties and candidates and it suggests that media coverage about the parties and candidates during the period were largely negative. However, news consumptions are not significantly related to any of the performance evaluations. Following the line of arguments throughout the chapter, a possible explanation of the results is that performance evaluations are mainly cognitive, thus media effects on evaluations would be intervened by knowledge.

Another interesting result is that in Figure 7.3 above we see that knowledge is positively related to attitude towards parties, but in Table 7.6 the relationship is negative. Of course, the objects are slightly different. In March the respondents were asked for their attitudes towards parties/politicians, in June they were asked for their evaluations of parties/candidates. But this difference is not likely to account for the difference in results. This difference in results suggests that before the campaign period, the media were covering the political parties in positive light, or at least a neutral fashion. A neutral coverage of political parties may still lead to more positive attitude towards parties since focusing on parties in political coverage can lead to

legitimization effects (Fung, 1995; 1998). Also, the attitudes measured in March are more general in the sense that they would involve evaluation of parties performance not only in the election but also other areas. But going into the major campaign period, media coverage would begin to focus on party performance in election, and the result in Table 7.6 suggests that the media covered them in a negative light.

Table 7.6 Media and knowledge effects on political evaluations

	<u>Dependent variable</u>		
	Evaluation of gov. performance	Evaluation of political parties performance	Evaluation of election
<i>Demographics (1)</i>	$R^2 = 0.8\%$	$R^2 = 2.2\%^{**}$	$R^2 = 1.8\%^{*}$
<i>Civic awareness (1)</i>	$\Delta R^2 = 2.3\%^{**}$	$\Delta R^2 = 2.1\%^{**}$	$\Delta R^2 = 3.0\%^{***}$
<i>News consumption and knowledge (1)</i>	$\Delta R^2 = 0.3\%$	$\Delta R^2 = 1.9\%^{**}$	$\Delta R^2 = 0.2\%$
News attention	-0.01	0.03	0.03
News exposure	-0.03	0.01	0.03
Knowledge	0.05	-0.14 ^{***}	0.01
<i>Performance evaluations (2)</i>	$\Delta R^2 = 30.9\%^{***}$	$\Delta R^2 = 24.7\%^{***}$	$\Delta R^2 = 24.7\%^{***}$
Evaluation of gov.	----	0.34 ^{***}	0.33 ^{***}
Evaluation of parties	0.36 ^{***}	----	0.26 ^{***}
Evaluation of election	0.29 ^{***}	0.25 ^{***}	----
<i>Attitudes towards pol. Institutions (1)</i>	$\Delta R^2 = 4.6\%^{***}$	$\Delta R^2 = 0.2\%$	$\Delta R^2 = 0.0\%$
Att. towards gov.	0.24 ^{***}	----	----
Att. towards parties	----	0.05	----
Att. towards election	----	----	0.00
Number of cases	536	524	520
% of variance accounted for	38.9% ^{***}	31.1% ^{***}	29.8% ^{***}
* $p < 0.10$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$			
(1) Variables are measured in March; (2) Variables are measured in June			

As expected, the three performance evaluation variables are closely related to each other, but the performance evaluations are not related to attitudes towards the institutions measured in March, except in the case of the government. It shows that the formation of performance evaluations about the government in the election,

unlike the other two, takes place before the actual campaign period.

Variability in evaluations

As shown in Table 7.6, people's evaluations towards the three institutions are significantly related to each other. There are several reasons why people would give largely similar evaluation scores to the objects. First, as discussed earlier it can be the result of people giving a response set when answering the questions. That is, they are not seriously answering questions but just give more or less the same answer to the set of questions asked. Second, it may be due to the fact that different people have different ways to utilize the answering scale. Third, people may actually see the three institutions as closely related to each other. This last reason has theoretical implications. Sniderman *et al.* (1991) have shown that a major difference between the educated and non-educated people in the US is that the former would rate the two major parties oppositely, while the latter would rate the two similarly. They concluded that the non-educated people simply fail to recognize that if they think one party is good, they should think its rival is bad. In the present study, the 7 evaluation questions have included various objects like the government and a number of parties which are rivals to each other. Though it is impossible to ascertain how different the 7 objects are, it is safe to assume that the 7 objects should have some differences.

Thus the variations among the evaluations is a matter related to both the respondents' use of the scale and the extent they differentiate the objects. We cannot differentiate the three reasons given above, but it is important to note that the three reasons are related to each other. A person has the ability to differentiate the objects also is less likely to give response sets. Then, what are the factors behind people giving similar or varying evaluations to different political objects?

It is very possible that news consumption would bring about more varying evaluations among the institutions. When a citizen is exposed to news, s/he gets the

information and impressions about different institutions and s/he is more capable to formulate different evaluations for different institutions. Besides, sophistication, as may also be related to amount of variation in performance evaluation since sophisticated people are more capable to differentiate the different political institutions. Thus the hypotheses can be stated as follows:

H7.5: Knowledge is related positively to the variability of evaluations.

H7.6: Media consumption is related positively to the variability of evaluations.

H7.7: Sophistication is related positively to the variability of evaluations.

Variability of evaluations is operationalized as the standard deviation of the 7 evaluations the respondents gave. Civic awareness, attitudes towards political institutions, demographics are controlled. We are particularly interested in the effects of news consumption, knowledge, and sophistication. The relationship between the amount of variation and the three particular evaluations are also of concern here.

Table 7.7 Determinants of variability of evaluations

	Variability of evaluations
<i>Demographics (1)</i>	$R^2 = 2.7\%^{***}$
<i>Civic awareness (1)</i>	$\Delta R^2 = 2.0\%^{**}$
<i>Attitudes towards political institutions (1)</i>	$\Delta R^2 = 0.1\%$
<i>News consumption and knowledge (1)</i>	$\Delta R^2 = 3.1\%^{***}$
News attention	0.09 ^{**}
News exposure	-0.01
Knowledge	0.12 ^{**}
Sophistication	0.01
<i>Performance evaluations (2)</i>	$\Delta R^2 = 6.5\%^{***}$
Evaluation of gov.	-0.08 [*]
Evaluation of parties	-0.24 ^{***}
Evaluation of election	0.26 ^{***}
Number of cases	557
% of variance accounted for	15.3% ^{***}
* p<0.10; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01	
(1) Variables are measured in March; (2) Variables are measured in June	

Table 7.7 shows that people with higher level of news attention and knowledge are both holding more varying evaluations of the different institutions. However, news exposure has no effect. Also the hypothesis about sophistication is not supported.

Why people with higher levels of sophistication turn out not to be especially likely to give more varying evaluations? At least part of the issue would be the high level of correlation among the knowledge variable and the sophistication measure. When two highly correlated variables are included into the same regression model, the problem of multicollinearity will be likely to make at least one variable to become insignificant. Besides, the insignificant result may also be due to the reason that people having higher levels of sophistication does not necessarily utilize their ability to differentiate objects at any time in a straight forward way. In fact, as people are more sophisticated and complicated in their political thinking, they would be more likely to take into account a larger number of factors in forming evaluations (Sniderman *et al.*, 1991), they are less likely to hold extreme attitudes and more likely to be moderates (Tetlock, 1983). After all, there is no reason to suppose that the most sophisticated people would differentiate the objects to an extent of exaggeration. In Tetlock's (1983) scheme about cognitive complexity, the most complex people are those who are not only able differentiate objects but also to integrate them together. Thus the most sophisticated people are likely to see similarities among the objects as well as differences. Actually, a result not shown in Table 7.7 is that education is negatively related to variability. This suggests that pure cognitive complexity has a negative effect on the extent of differentiation made.

A further interesting point in Table 7.7 is that variations among evaluations are positively related to evaluation of the election, but negatively to evaluation of parties and government. It shows that in the survey when people make varying judgments, people tend to give higher marks to the election as a whole but lower marks to the government, and even lower marks to the political parties.

Although we found no relationship between sophistication and variability of evaluations, it does not mean that sophistication is irrelevant. We have already seen that among the sophisticated people news consumption and knowledge are related to political attitudes more closely, while in the case of non-sophisticated people news consumption and knowledge seem to be unrelated to political attitudes except interests. Can we find similar patterns here?

Knowledge is only significantly related to evaluations of parties in the earlier analysis. Following the arguments so far, it is expected that the relationship between knowledge and party evaluations would be stronger among the sophisticated people.

H7.8: Knowledge is related to parties performance evaluations in the sophisticated group to a larger extent.

Regression analysis is carried out for the two groups on each of the three evaluations and the results are shown in Table 7.8.

Table 7.8 Media and knowledge effects on evaluations of political institutions

	<u>Evaluations of election</u>	
	<i>Low sophistication</i>	<i>High sophistication</i>
<u>Demographics</u> ^	R ² = 1.5%	R ² = 2.4%
<u>Civic awareness</u> ^^	ΔR ² = 2.1%	ΔR ² = 5.0%***
<u>News consumption and knowledge</u>	ΔR ² = 0.5%	ΔR ² = 0.9%
News attention	0.03	-0.00
News exposure	0.10	-0.02
Knowledge	-0.04	0.00
<u>Performance evaluations</u>	ΔR ² = 24.2%***	ΔR ² = 34.8%***
Evaluation of gov.	0.45***	0.24***
Evaluation of parties	0.08	0.47***
Variability of evaluations	0.14**	0.23***
<u>Attitudes towards political institutions</u>	ΔR ² = 0.0%	ΔR ² = 0.0%
Att. Towards election	0.02	0.00
Number of cases	238	282
% of variance accounted for	28.3%***	43.1%***
* p<0.10; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01		

Table 7.8 Continued

	<u>Evaluations of government performance</u>	
	Low sophistication	High sophistication
<u>Demographics</u>	$R^2 = 1.1\%$	$R^2 = 1.6\%$
<u>Civic awareness</u>	$\Delta R^2 = 2.9\%$	$\Delta R^2 = 7.7\%^{***}$
<u>News consumption and knowledge</u>	$\Delta R^2 = 0.5\%$	$\Delta R^2 = 1.1\%$
News attention	-0.02	-0.00
News exposure	-0.08	-0.01
Knowledge	0.06	0.04
<u>Performance evaluations</u>	$\Delta R^2 = 29.2\%^{***}$	$\Delta R^2 = 33.3\%^{***}$
Evaluation of parties	0.32 ^{***}	0.38 ^{***}
Evaluation of election	0.37 ^{***}	0.24 ^{***}
Variability of evaluations	0.10 [*]	-0.19 ^{***}
<u>Attitudes towards political institutions</u>	$\Delta R^2 = 6.5\%^{***}$	$\Delta R^2 = 2.0\%^{***}$
Att. Towards gov.	0.28 ^{***}	0.16 ^{***}
Number of cases	248	288
% of variance accounted for	40.2% ^{***}	45.6% ^{***}
<u>Evaluations of political parties performance</u>		
<u>Demographics</u>	$R^2 = 0.1\%$	$R^2 = 3.8\%^{*}$
<u>Civic awareness</u>	$\Delta R^2 = 2.1\%$	$\Delta R^2 = 4.1\%^{**}$
<u>News consumption and knowledge</u>	$\Delta R^2 = 0.6\%$	$\Delta R^2 = 3.8\%^{***}$
News attention	0.02	0.07
News exposure	0.01	0.01
Knowledge	-0.04	-0.15 ^{***}
<u>Performance evaluations</u>	$\Delta R^2 = 18.7\%^{***}$	$\Delta R^2 = 37.2\%^{***}$
Evaluation of gov.	0.32 ^{***}	0.31 ^{***}
Evaluation of election	0.08	0.43 ^{***}
Variability of evaluations	-0.27 ^{***}	-0.12 ^{**}
<u>Attitudes towards political institutions</u>	$\Delta R^2 = 0.7\%$	$\Delta R^2 = 0.0\%$
Att. Towards parties	0.09	0.00
Number of cases	244	284
% of variance accounted for	22.2% ^{***}	48.9% ^{***}

From the table, we can see that knowledge is related negatively and significantly to evaluations of party and candidate performance only in the high sophistication group. The relationship does not exist in the other group. Knowledge also does not have any effects on the other evaluations after the division. Nor does news consumption has any visible effects. Thus the hypothesis is supported.

For the relationship between news consumption and evaluations, we see that

none of the relationship is significant. However, one thing should be noted is that, while in the previous section we see that news consumption is related to attitudes only in the high sophistication group, the results in Table 7.8 suggests otherwise. The regression coefficients of news attention and exposure for the low sophistication group are larger in magnitude than the corresponding coefficients in the high sophistication group in 4 out of 6 times. The coefficient is larger in the high sophistication group in only 1 out of 6 times (news attention and evaluations of party performance). Actually, news exposure's positive relationship with evaluation of election and it's negative relationship with evaluation of government are not too far from significant (beta coefficients are 0.10 and -0.08 respectively, which may have been significant if sample size is larger) in the low sophistication group. These results, taken together, seem to suggest that news consumption has slightly stronger direct relationship with evaluations in the low sophistication group.

As previously explained, the insignificant relationship between news consumption and attitudes in the low sophistication group is largely due to the not-so-salient media political coverage before the major campaign. When the major campaign period began, the media shifted the focus to the election and the previously uninterested and uninvolved citizens, who tend to be the unsophisticated, would start to receive messages from the media. It seems that, going into the major campaign period, the difference between the two groups of people starts to appear as a cognitive decision making vs. affective decision making difference again.

Another interesting comparison between the two groups is that the relationships between the three performance evaluations. For the less sophisticated people, evaluation of election is not related to evaluation of political parties performance. Only the relationship between evaluations of government and parties, and that between government and the election, are significant. For the high sophistication group, however, the three are closely related. Actually, for the sophisticated people their evaluations of the election as a whole is related to evaluation of parties and

candidates to a larger extent. It seems to suggest that the two groups have a somewhat different understanding of what the election is about. For the high sophistication group, the election is one that is organized by the government, and more importantly, participated by the parties and candidates who are going to be the representatives of the public. For the low sophistication group, however, election seems to be primarily an event held by the government.

Another contrast is the relationship between evaluations and variability of evaluations. For the sophisticated variability is positively related to evaluation of election but negatively to that of the government and parties/candidates, a pattern similar to that for the whole sample. However, for the non-sophisticated variability is positively related to evaluations of government and election and negatively to parties/candidates evaluation. It shows that, the non-sophisticated, beside viewing the election as an event held by the government, also gives comparatively better evaluations of government performance than candidates' performance when differentiation is made. But for the sophisticated, although they gave relatively negative evaluations of parties/candidate and also government performance than that of the election when the institutions' performance are differentiated.

Discussion

In this chapter the various relationships between political attitudes/ evaluations and news consumption/knowledge are analyzed. On the whole, news consumption is not particularly strongly related to political attitudes and evaluations. However, the lack of strong and direct relationships between news consumption and attitudes/evaluations may just be reflecting the argument made by Zaller (1992) that news consumption variables are not reliable. The present author includes the media variables in the analysis due to the belief these variables should not be totally ignored, but it is undeniable that they are not powerful predictors of media effects in the methodological sense. The measure proposed by Zaller, factual knowledge, is

shown to be more powerful. But researchers should be careful in interpreting knowledge effects on attitudes and evaluations. Zaller (1996; and Hunt 1994, 1995) seems to suggest that knowledge effects are media effects. Although we do not, and in fact cannot, deny that people derive political knowledge largely from the media, we also have to keep in mind that there are other channels of information for individuals, like interpersonal communication and social interactions (Huckfeldt and Sprague, 1995; 1991; Huckfeldt, 1987). Also, from the analysis in chapter 6 we see that some people are more likely to learn news from the media than others. Moreover, when people receive information they may have interpreted or re-interpreted the message and information themselves (Kuklinski and Hurley, 1996; Gamson, 1992). Therefore, at most we can conclude that a large part, but not all, knowledge effects can be considered as indirect media effects.

Nevertheless, thinking about knowledge effects as indirect media effects lead us to consider media effects on individuals as dependent not only on exposure or attention but also reception. Moreover, what kinds of effects media would have on individual is largely dependent on how the media cover news and thus constructing the information environment in which individuals reside. Therefore, media do not always have the same kind and same amount of effects on individuals, what the media are actually reporting is a very important factor.

Studying media or knowledge effects on individuals also has to take into account individual characteristics. A particular important one is level of political sophistication. The results in this chapter are consistent with the general theoretical arguments about sophistication in the West. In general, sophisticated people are not only more likely to learn information from the media, they are also more likely to relate these information and messages to their political attitudes. Lastly, the analysis shows that people with different levels of sophistication have different configurations in their political evaluations. They may even have a different understanding of the election. It can be an interesting path that later research can pursue.

VIII. Voter turnout

The previous chapters have shown how media lead to learning, and how media and knowledge are related to, or lead to, the formation of civic awareness, political attitudes and evaluations. This chapter will tackle voter turnout in the 1998 LegCo election. What are the underlying factors driving people to vote? Do different people go out to vote based on different reasons?

Answering the questions will give the final empirical evidence of media effects regarding its ability to activate informed participation. Again, the analysis will be conducted with the consideration of knowledge as the cognitive route, and sophistication as the contingent condition, of media effects. Political attitudes, which are affected by media and knowledge to a certain extent, will also be included. The model developed in the chapter may not be the most comprehensive or powerful one for explaining voter turnout, but it is a model which allows us to derive the most important information about direct and indirect media effects on voter turnout.

The voter turnout model

Media and knowledge variables are the major focus. As argued in previous chapters, knowledge effects can be, to a large extent, traced back to media use since media constitute the main part of the information environment in an election. If the amount of knowledge will lead to turnout, then we can say that media have indirectly led to turnout. Knowledge effects can be broken down into two aspects, the first is the content of knowledge, the second is the fact of knowing itself. For the former, knowledge has effects on individuals because the individual knows about something that may be negative or positive towards particular topics or objects. For the latter, knowledge has effects on individual because the feeling and cognition of oneself being knowledgeable can breed one's involvement in public affairs and confidence

about making decisions. Knowing something more may also make the object more salient in one's mind and thus increasing the probability for one to take any kind of action towards that object.

Of course, it is impossible to separate the two kinds of effects in this study. In the last chapter, when knowledge effect on political attitudes is the focus, it may be suggested that the two kinds of knowledge may have contributed to different effects. For instance, the positive effects of knowledge on political interests and attitude towards participation are likely to be effects of knowing, and that is why the effects found are positive. But knowledge effect on attitudes towards political institutions are likely to be content effects, as suggested by the varying signs of relationship between knowledge and attitudes towards and evaluations of different objects at different times. The involvement, salience, and confidence gained by knowing may be relevant to some aspects of the attitudes towards political institutions, such as attitude certainty and extremity (Krosnick, 1995), but not likely to lead to a change of the direction of the attitudes. In the following analysis, when voter turnout is the focus, it is believed that knowledge is likely to have positive effects on turnout due to the "knowing" mechanism, while the content of knowledge may also be relevant and affect the final extent of knowledge effect found.

In the previous chapter it is pointed out that media may have cognitive as well as affective consequences on individuals. Knowledge is a variable used to specify the cognitive route of media effects. Thus, the remaining direct media effects are likely to be affective, i.e., media induce feelings and emotions into people and lead to certain attitudes or behaviors.

Sophistication, which is related to a person's ability to make sense of politics, is also a potential factor. However, the high correlation between sophistication and knowledge make it unsuitable to add both of them to the model. Sophistication, therefore, will be treated as a mediating factor in subsequent analysis.

Attitudes and civic awareness constitute another group of factors. Theoretically,

media can affect turnout by altering people's attitudes. Of course, due to the inability to show the casual relationship between media and attitudes, we cannot conclude the relationship between media and attitudes' effects on turnout.

In constructing the regression model for voter turnout, there is in fact a large number of variables to consider. Partisanship was found to be a factor driving people to vote (Campbell *et al.*, 1960). However, in Hong Kong the notion of partisanship or party identification is actually problematic since political parties in Hong Kong do not have a long history and people did not form affective ties with or loyalty to parties (Louie, 1996). Although parties are developing in Hong Kong, their function and power are still far away from that enjoyed by their Western counterparts. Thus for the sake of parsimony it is not included in the model.

Civic awareness is included into the regression model. Attitudes towards political institutions, as measured in the March survey, would not be included since their role in the explanatory model will largely overlap with that of performance evaluations. Although they are not measuring the same thing (as shown in Chapter 7), both of them will answer the question whether attitudes towards political institutions count in the decision of turnout. Therefore, for simplicity performance evaluations are chosen to be included due to the fact that they are referring to evaluations formed specifically related to the election.

As with most analysis in this area, demographics are included. Interpersonal persuasion, and party/candidate canvassing through telephone or home visit, are also included.

The analysis and results

Besides specifying the variables in the model, another issue of concern is response bias. Nearly every post-election survey, no matter conducted in which country, records voter turnout that is higher than the official figure. In this study, while the official figure is 53%, the survey has recorded a turnout rate of 82% instead. This

discrepancy is due to three factors. First, government voter registration records inevitably contain "dead records," such as those who had emigrated to other countries, or died. This would make the official turnout rate lower than the real one. Of course, this problem is not likely to account for a large portion, let alone all, of the discrepancy. More important issues are sample bias and response bias. Sample bias refers to the bias resulting from some people agreeing to cooperate and be interviewed while others did not. The resulting sample is likely to be biased towards those who are more interested in politics and more willing to express their opinions. And these people are also more likely to vote.

Response bias is another problem involved. Opinion expression through opinion surveys is sometimes conceptualized as "private" expression by some scholars (Herbst, 1993). However, expression through opinion polls in fact also has the "public" character. Research in the past has shown that people would adjust their answers to polls on some issues due to gender or race of the interviewer or other factors. Sometimes, respondents would feel the need to report answers that are socially desirable. It is not known to what extent this problem would exist in Hong Kong in the case of voter turnout. On one hand, it can be argued that voting is not a fully developed and strong social norm. Thus the problem may not be serious. On the other hand, the unexpectedly high turnout rate in May 1998 may drive people to recognize voting as socially desirable, thus to adjust their answers.

In facing these problems, what a research can do is to weigh the sample. Ideally, a research should assign heavier weights for people who are likely to have told the truth and lighter weights for those who probably have told lies. We can assume that those people who reported non-voting are likely to have told truth since there is little reason for one to mis-report their behavior in a way against the social norm. We expect that some of the people reported voting were hiding their actual behavior. But there is no uncontroversial procedure or method for the present author to differentiate specifically who among the reported voters are more likely to have

biased their response.

Moreover, the author contends that sample bias accounts for the largest portion of the discrepancy between the government official turnout rate and the 82% recorded in the survey of this study. It is because response rates of survey research in Hong Kong are generally low (43% for the March survey in the present study). And the present study involves a panel design, thus further contributing to the sample bias problem due to panel attrition.

Thus, a simple weighting procedure is designed to make the data analysis more meaningful. All self-reported non-voters are given the same weight which is heavier than that of all the self-reported voters. The goal is to make the turnout rate of the weighted sample equal to 53%, the government official figure. The result of the weighting procedure is that all non-voters are given a weight of 2.455 and all voters are given a weight of 0.656. See Appendix A for the calculation involved in and some discussions about the weighting procedure.

We can now go on to the analysis of voter turnout model. The logistic regression models will be presented with more details. The independent variables are standardized before entering the model so that the beta coefficients can be compared with each other (see Appendix A). The variables are entered into the model in 6 blocks in the following order: demographics, news consumption, civic awareness, performance evaluations, knowledge, and campaign mobilization. It is a general model to test media effects on turnout, thus there is no specific hypothesis to specify (or the general hypothesis is that the model can explain turnout). Both weighted and non-weighted models are analyzed. The results are summarized in Table 8.1 and 8.2.

Table 8.1 Non-weighted model of voter turnout

	<i>Dependent variable: voter turnout</i>					
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Full model
<u>Demographics</u>						
Family income	-0.06	-0.06	-0.06	-0.07	-0.10	-0.14
Personal income	-0.17	-0.18	-0.17	-0.19	-0.20	-0.18
Age	0.42***	0.45***	0.46***	0.49***	0.47***	0.37**
Education	0.47***	0.47***	0.43***	0.48***	0.36**	0.38**
Sex	-0.12	-0.14	-0.15	-0.19	-0.13	-0.14
<u>News consumption</u>						
News exposure		-0.17	-0.17	-0.18	-0.22*	-0.22*
News attention		0.09	-0.04	-0.05	-0.20	-0.19
<u>Civic awareness</u>						
Attitudes towards Participation			0.01	0.02	0.01	0.02
Sense of efficacy			0.12	0.12	0.14	0.12
Sense of duty and Rights			0.26**	0.28**	0.22*	0.24*
Political interests			0.26*	0.22	0.21	0.22
<u>Performance evalua.</u>						
Government				-0.18	-0.20	-0.19
Parties & candidates				-0.01	0.06	0.04
Election				0.35***	0.35***	0.33**
<u>Knowledge</u>						
					0.49***	0.46***
<u>Campaign mobilization</u>						
Canvassing						0.01
Interpersonal persuasion						0.37***
Number of cases	557	557	557	557	557	557
Incremental Chi-Square	14.4**	2.3	13.3***	7.6*	12.0***	11.1***
% of cases correctly classified in full model = 80.97%						
Total Chi-Square = 60.78***						
-2-log likelihood = - 495.4						
Psuedo-R-square = .10.93%						
* p < 0.10; ** p < 0.05; *** p < 0.01						

Table 8.2 Weighted model of voter turnout

	<i>Dependent variable: voter turnout</i>					
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Full model
<u>Demographics</u>						
Family income	-0.04	-0.01	-0.06	-0.03	-0.05	-0.12
Personal income	-0.18	-0.20	-0.18	-0.15	-0.15	-0.11
Age	0.43***	0.46***	0.48***	0.50***	0.46***	0.36***
Education	0.48***	0.47***	0.41***	0.44***	0.30**	0.32**
Sex	-0.13	-0.14	-0.14	-0.17*	-0.09	-0.10
<u>News consumption</u>						
News exposure		-0.17*	-0.17*	-0.18*	-0.21**	-0.19*
News attention		0.06	-0.08	-0.09	-0.25*	-0.23*
<u>Civic awareness</u>						
Attitudes towards Participation			-0.01	0.01	-0.01	-0.02
Sense of efficacy			0.11	0.10	0.13	0.12
Sense of duty and Rights			0.27***	0.27***	0.23**	0.26**
Political interests			0.29***	0.27**	0.28**	0.29**
<u>Performance evalu.</u>						
Government				-0.18	-0.21*	-0.20*
Parties & candidates				-0.02	0.09	0.09
Election				0.30***	0.29***	0.26**
<u>Knowledge</u>						
					0.50***	0.44***
<u>Campaign mobilization</u>						
Canvassing						0.01
Interpersonal persuasion						0.34***
Number of cases	557	557	557	557	557	557
Incremental Chi-Square	23.9***	3.2	21.3***	9.3**	19.2***	13.9***
% of cases correctly classified in full model = 67.70%						
Total Chi-Square = 90.79***						
-2-log likelihood = 680.469						
Psuedo-R-square = 11.77%						
* p < 0.10; ** p < 0.05; *** p < 0.01						
Notes (for both tables):						
1. Entries are standardized beta coefficients						
2. All variables, except voter turnout, campaign mobilization and performance evaluations, are measured in March.						
3. The number of cases is 557 since the June survey is involved. In the June survey 559 respondents were successfully contacted.						

In both tables, before later variables are included news attention's beta coefficient is positive is insignificant. Although news exposure's coefficient is already marginally significant when it is added, consider the fact that news consumption as a block is the only non-significant block of factors among the 6, the direct media effects on turnout are actually negligible before other variables are added. However, in the full model, when variables like knowledge and civic awareness are added, the negative coefficients of attention and significant relationship between exposure and turnout are both significant at 0.10 level. This suggests that news consumption, by providing information and promoting civic awareness, has indirect positive effects on turnout. However, these positive effects are accompanied by negative effects of news consumption²³.

The finding of negative media effects is different from many earlier research in both US and Hong Kong, which usually find a positive effect of media use on turnout. However, it should be noted that in past research on media effects on turnout the control variables usually do not include knowledge and some of the attitudinal variables included in the present case. Actually, the arguments for media positive effects on turnout usually rest the effects of media use on interests or involvement, knowledge etc. But in this case these factors mediating media use's positive impact are mostly controlled. Then, what is left over? As mentioned news consumption would have affective consequences besides cognitive consequences. Since media coverage during election campaign usually focuses on the horse-race, mudslinging and conflicts (as will be discussed in the next chapter), negative affective consequences of news consumption are in fact probable. Thus, a probable explanation of the negative effects is the negative affect, like feeling of annoyance, disgust, meaninglessness etc, produced as a result of media use, which is caused by

²³ A way to check whether the interpretation is valid, as well as the validity of media effects. The logistic regression is run again with news consumption added as the last block of factors. The result is that, different from what Table 8.1 and 8.2 show, news consumption as a block is significant at 0.06 in the unweighted model and significant at 0.02 in the weighted model. This result supports the

the way media cover the election.

Besides news consumption, knowledge is another concern. The tables show that knowledge is significantly and positively related to turnout. The addition of knowledge has given rise to significant increase in the explanatory power of the model, even though knowledge is the fifth block to be added into the model. It has the largest regression coefficients among all independent variables. It supports the expectation that people having higher levels of knowledge are more likely to vote. Here, one possible confusion is that if media have negative impacts on voter turnout and if the negative impacts are to be explained by media's negative coverage of the election, then why knowledge, as derived mostly from the media, could have positive effects on turnout? The answer to this question is that, as pointed out earlier, that knowledge is expected to have positive effects on turnout not only because of the content of knowledge, but the self-perceived state of being knowledgeable. Also, it is pointed out in Chapter 7 that affect and cognition about the same object are not necessarily consistent.

Perhaps there is a need to further articulate the first argument. We can assume that, at least usually, knowledge would lead to greater confidence, self-efficacy etc, that are advantageous to participation. But what if the knowledge themselves are negative? Here, we have to go back to how knowledge is defined and used in this research. In the survey, and throughout the study, knowledge is referring to factual knowledge. Assume that media coverage has focused on the horse race and mudslinging, news consumers may acquire the messages that politicians are selfish and attacking each other meaninglessly. However, these messages are not factual knowledge. A politician has utilized a certain strategy is a fact, but a politician has utilized a certain strategy completely due to selfish concern is not. Thus media messages are combinations of factual information, as well as affective and evaluative elements. Sometimes neutral information can be singled out from largely positive or

negative media messages.

Moreover, the absorption of factual information entails information processing and the processes of information processing have complexities that this study would not be able to deal with. On the whole, it can be suggested that while media messages may be largely negative so that media consumption has negative effects on turnout, the factual information within the messages may not be negative to the same extent. And although we may still expect the content of knowledge may have detrimental effects on turnout, the positive effects of knowing and being confident and self-efficacious have off-set the negative effects of content. As a result, knowledge has an overall positive effect on turnout.

Some of the findings in the models are echoing similar past research in Hong Kong and US past elections. People who are older, who have higher sense of duty and rights, higher levels of political interests (in the weighted model only), higher education, and who have received interpersonal persuasion are shown to be more likely to have voted. These findings were similar to the case in 1995 LegCo election (Shum, 1996). However, efficacy, and party canvassing which were found to be significant in past research in Hong Kong or US have no effects on turnout in this case. For efficacy, the difference between the result here and that reported by Shum on the 1995 election would at least be partly due to methodological differences. Note that the civic awareness variables are measured in March and they are having low reliability generally. Also, the way of operationalization is different. For party canvassing, Shum's findings in 1995 were that only telephone canvassing was effective in 1995 but not home visit. In this study, however, party canvassing by home visits and telephone are combined into one question. Of course, the results may also reflect the different contexts of the two elections. But a discussion on this aspect would go too far away from the central focus in this study. Thus the puzzle will leave to those concerned to solve.

Voter turnout is related positively to people's evaluation of the election. Actually,

as a variable asked in the second-wave survey it is difficult to say that whether evaluation of election has caused people to go out to vote or people's voting behavior has led them to evaluate the election more positively. Both ways are possible. An interesting point is that turnout is negatively related to evaluation of government performance. Though the evidence is far from conclusive (significant at 0.10 level only), it echoes the common view that the exceptionally high voter turnout was partly due to the discontent of the people towards government after the handover.

Voter turnout and sophistication

Following the analysis in the previous chapters, it would be important to know whether different people's voting behavior is related to different sets of factors. The differences in the voting behaviors of the sophisticated and non-sophisticated people have been studied by a number of researchers in the West (Funk, 1997; MacDonald et al., 1995; Sniderman et al., 1991). It is also expected that, in this study, people with different levels of sophistication would be affected by different factors in their turnout decision. More specifically, in previous analysis we see that knowledge and media are related to attitudes and evaluations to a larger extent in the high sophistication group, showing a larger extent of cognitive processes at work in the mind of the sophisticated people. Does the same pattern repeat in the case of voter turnout? The results of the logistic regression analysis for the two groups are summarized in Table 8.3. For simplicity, only the weighted complete models for the two groups are shown. The overall explanatory power of the model, in terms of percent of cases correctly classified, is slightly stronger in the low sophistication group. Similarly, the model Chi-Square value is larger in the case of the low sophistication group, and the -2-log likelihood value is lower (indicating less error) for the group. Besides, out of the 17 variables in the explanatory model 12 of them are significant at 0.10 level in the low sophistication group. Eight are significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 8.3 Voter turnout for the two sophistication group

	<i>Dependent variable: voter turnout</i>	
	Low sophistication	High sophistication
<i>Demographics</i>	Δ Chi-Square = 15.8***	Δ Chi-Square = 15.0**
Family income	0.18	-0.49**
Personal income	-0.67***	0.23
Age	0.57***	0.26
Education	0.40*	0.34
Sex	-0.50***	0.10
<i>News consumption</i>	Δ Chi-Square = 5.1*	Δ Chi-Square = 6.1**
News exposure	-0.41**	-0.20
News attention	-0.64***	0.07
<i>Civic awareness</i>	Δ Chi-Square = 8.9*	Δ Chi-Square = 16.8***
Attitudes towards participation	0.17	0.05
Sense of efficacy	0.30*	-0.01
Sense of duty and rights	0.04	0.43**
Political interests	0.37*	0.33*
<i>Performance evaluations</i>	Δ Chi-Square = 21.1***	Δ Chi-Square = 3.1
Government	-0.14	-0.28
Parties & candidates	0.31	0.15
Election	0.78***	0.07
<i>Knowledge</i>	Δ Chi-Square = 16.9***	Δ Chi-Square = 6.3**
Total knowledge level	0.79***	0.48**
<i>Campaign mobilization</i>	Δ Chi-Square = 12.5***	Δ Chi-Square = 6.6**
Canvassing	0.25*	-0.02
Interpersonal persuasion	0.45***	0.42***
Number of cases	260	297
Chi-Square	80.3***	53.9***
% of cases correctly classified	69.12%	64.7%
-2-log likelihood	279.9	357.2
Pseudo-R-square	22.29%	13.11%
* p < 0.10; ** p < 0.05; *** p < 0.01		
Entries are standardized beta coefficients.		

However, in the high sophistication group the number of variables explaining turnout is only 5 if 0.10 significant level is used and 4 if 0.05 level is used. This is somewhat surprising at first sight. This shows that the variables in general are better predictors of voter turnout of the non-sophisticated people, despite the fact that the low sophistication group has a somewhat smaller sample size.

In addition, different from our earlier findings in the previous chapters that knowledge is related more strongly to attitudes and evaluations in the high sophistication group, this time the beta coefficient of knowledge is larger in the low sophistication group. Also, news exposure and attention are significantly related to turnout only in the low sophistication group.

However, a closer look at the findings and the theoretical arguments made earlier may make the findings understandable. There are actually three blocks of factors that explain the turnout of less sophisticated people better – performance evaluations, knowledge, and campaign mobilization (the difference in the Chi-Square value for demographics in the two groups is negligible). Among the three the most important one is performance evaluations. The incremental Chi-Square due to evaluation variables in the two models differ by 18, which is two-thirds of the discrepancy in the model Chi-Square values of the models in the two groups. More specifically, the strong relationship between evaluation of the election and turnout only exists in the low sophistication group.

As mentioned in the last section, we actually cannot be certain about whether people first formulate a good evaluation about the election and then go out to vote or formulate evaluation according to whether they have gone out to vote. Researchers familiar with psychological theories would easily recognize the possibility of the reduction of cognitive dissonance, or impression management, at work (Bem, 1967). If impression management or reducing cognitive dissonance is really the reason behind the phenomenon then the fact that this phenomenon only exists in the low sophistication group is actually reasonable. Since cognitively sophisticated individuals would be less likely to rely on this evaluation formation heuristic. Of course, this explanation is not what the data can show. But we also see the problem in explanation if one-wave post-election survey is used. As democracy is developing in Hong Kong and people are not experienced in voting, the act of voting or non-voting itself probably will lead to changes in attitudes and evaluations.

About media and knowledge effects on turnout, it should be noted that in the low sophistication group the negative effects of news consumption did not appear until knowledge and civic awareness are included in the model. News consumption, when added as the second block of factors, is only significant at 0.10 level in the low sophistication group. But after civic awareness and knowledge are controlled the effects become quite remarkable (0.41 and 0.64). Besides, news consumption as a block of factors contribute significantly ($p < 0.05$) to the explanatory power of the model when it is added as the second block of factor in the high sophistication group. However, in the full model the neither attention nor exposure is significant. In other words, in the high sophistication group, attention and exposure are related to turnout only when control variables are not added. As previously argued, direct media effects after controlling for civic awareness and knowledge are likely to be largely affective in nature. Thus the findings in Table 8.3 is actually consistent with the argument that less sophisticated people are more likely to take the affective routes in judgment and decision making. Also, in the previous chapter we see that for the high sophistication group, media use and knowledge are related to political attitudes to a larger extent. Thus another explanation for the weaker relationship between media and turnout shown in Table 8.3 is that the effects of media on turnout is mediated by attitudinal variables to a larger extent for the high sophistication group, therefore the remaining direct relationship between media and turnout is weaker or even non-existent.

The discrepancy of the explanatory power of knowledge in the two groups can be explained in a similar way. In the previous chapter, when studying the relationship between knowledge and attitudes and evaluations we are mainly focusing on the cognitive consequences of knowledge, that is, the content of the knowledge and information lead one to make a certain judgment. However, the fact of knowing something itself may have consequences on an individual regardless of the actual content of the knowledge. As argued earlier, in the case of turnout the content of information is less likely to be relevant. Thus the slightly stronger relationship

between knowledge and voter turnout in the low sophistication group also does not defy the general argument followed so far.

Lastly, the fact that campaign mobilizing is more important for the low sophistication group is not surprising at all. As following the literature and theoretical arguments we can expect that non-sophisticated people are more likely to be affected by direct persuasion of various kinds.

Contrary to the above factors, civic awareness explains the turnout of sophisticated group better. In general terms, this is also consistent with the argument that sophisticated people are more likely to base their judgments and decisions to some general and underlying attitudes. More specifically, the most important civic awareness factor at work for the high sophistication group is sense of duty and rights, while sense of efficacy is more important in the low sophistication group. Political interest is almost equally important in the two groups.

Lastly, researchers interested in the social structural analysis of voting behavior may find the demographics variables in the two groups interesting. While the Chi-Square contributed by the demographics block in the two groups are almost identical, the factors at work in the two groups are completely different. For the low sophistication group, voters are likely to be older man having lower personal income but higher levels of education. Among the high sophistication group the only factor that is significant is the only factor not significant in the other group – people with lower family income are more likely to vote²⁴.

Discussion

This chapter has presented the last analysis of media effects in the election.

²⁴ Some readers may find the differences in the explanatory power of the demographic variables strange, especially the difference between personal income and family income. One possible criticism is that the simultaneous inclusion of personal and family income would lead to multicollinearity problem. The author creates a new income variable by averaging personal income and family income, then re-runs the analysis of Table 8.3 by substituting personal and family income with the new variable. The overall pattern remains very similar. And the arguments put forward about regarding civic awareness, performance evaluations, media use, knowledge etc, can be retained.

Voter turnout is explained by a model. The regression results do echo findings in earlier elections in Hong Kong and some similar analysis in the US. Of course, it should be noted that, like the case in US, the explanatory power of the model as a whole does not match the power of theoretical models used in explaining other political phenomenon. A measure of psuedo-R-Square, which is analogous to R-Square value in multiple regression (Menard, 1995), is calculated for each analysis²⁵. It is 11.77% in the weighted model for the whole sample. For the low and high sophistication group, the value is 22.29% and 13.11% respectively. In other words, by separating the whole sample into two groups, the explanatory power of the model increases, especially in the case of the low sophistication group.

The direct effects of news exposure, and the indirect effects of media through knowledge, show that media are, as argued at the beginning of the whole study, an important component in the electoral process in Hong Kong. The results suggest that news consumption and knowledge are two factors that can be meaningfully studied in research about the political processes in Hong Kong.

The differentiation between people with high and low sophistication provides us with previously unacknowledged, empirically interesting and theoretically important results. It shows that researchers should not assume that the same factors would work for everyone in a society. The identification of a few key characteristics that would differentiate people into categories will be important. Political sophistication, which refers to people's cognitive ability to process political information and making political judgments, is one of such characteristics which help explaining the political behavior and attitudes of citizens. Future research can try to focus on other characteristics to explain how different people make their voting decisions differently.

The author has to acknowledge that some of the explanations given earlier regarding how different factors explain turnout in the two groups of people are largely

²⁵ It is calculated by:
 $\text{Chi-Square value} / (\text{Chi-Square value} + -2\text{-log likelihood})$

ad hoc. But I have tried to give a coherent account that could explain the findings as a whole, instead of one argument for one finding.

Here, the major hypotheses and findings can be summarized together to give an overall picture of the results thus far.

Table 8.4 Summary of data analysis on media effects from Chapter 6 to 8

Number	Hypothesis or question	Results or observations
H6.1	News consumption, as the source from which most common people derive their political knowledge, will lead to higher levels of knowledge.	Hypothesis supported in a multiple regression analysis.
H6.2	A person's level of political sophistication, by facilitating various cognitive process, will lead to higher levels of knowledge.	Hypothesis supported in a multiple regression analysis.
H6.3	Sophistication will have an interaction effect with news consumption because sophistication is a pre-condition of learning from the mass media.	Hypothesis supported in a multiple regression analysis.
H6.4	Interpersonal communication is also a channel for information and so will be related with knowledge, but to a lesser extent than mass communication.	Hypothesis supported in a multiple regression analysis.
H6.5	Sophistication is not a condition of learning in interpersonal communication, thus there will be no interaction effect between sophistication and interpersonal communication.	Hypothesis supported in a multiple regression analysis.
Q7.1	What kinds of relationship would exist between attitudes at the bivariate and multivariate levels?	Attitudes are inter-connected but not in a pair-wise fashion. At the multivariate level an "attitude structure" can be drawn.
Q7.2	What kinds of relationship would exist between media, knowledge and attitudes at the bivariate and multivariate levels?	Media and knowledge are related to different attitudes at the bivariate level but the relationship decreased at multivariate level. Knowledge emerges as a more important correlates of attitudes.
H7.1	More relationships between knowledge and attitudes will exist for the sophisticated group.	Hypothesis supported by correlation analysis for the two groups separately.
H7.2	More relationships between media consumption and attitudes will exist for the low sophistication group.	Hypothesis not supported. Suggested explanation is that the not-so-salient coverage of politics before the major campaign period makes media use not useful for forming general political attitudes for the non-sophisticated.

Table 8.4 Continued

Number	Hypothesis or question	Results or observations
H7.3	Attitudes towards political institutions measured in March would most likely be related to specific evaluations measured after the election in the case of the government.	Hypothesis supported by multiple regression analysis.
H7.4	Knowledge is more likely to have effects on people's evaluations of political parties and candidates rather than their evaluations of the other two political institutions.	Hypothesis supported in multiple regression analysis.
H7.5	Knowledge is related positively to the variability of evaluations.	Hypothesis supported in multiple regression analysis.
H7.6	Media consumption is related positively to the variability of evaluations.	Only news attention is related positively to variability, news exposure is not.
H7.7	Sophistication is related positively to the variability of evaluations.	Hypothesis not supported in multiple regression analysis.
H7.8	Knowledge will be related to evaluations of political parties to a larger extent in the sophisticated group.	Hypothesis supported in multiple regression analysis.
Q8.1	A model of voter turnout is specified to test media and knowledge effects on turnout.	Knowledge is related positively and strongly with turnout. Media consumption is only slightly related to turnout before controlling for other variables. After controlling, media consumption is negatively related to turnout significantly. It shows that media consumption has both positive and negative consequences on turnout. The positive consequences are mediated by knowledge and civic awareness, but the negative consequences, likely to be affective in nature, are not mediated by any variables exist in the model.
Q8.2	The voter turnout model is tested for the high sophistication and low sophistication groups separately to see the difference between the two groups.	Knowledge and media are related with turnout in the low sophistication group to a larger extent. For the sophisticated people media consumption is not related to turnout. There are also numerous differences on other variables between the results for the two groups.

If some last words should be added as a conclusion for the analysis of media effects, we can note the following points. First, media do have the potential to bring

about effects on people's cognition, attitudes, and behavior. The effects can be direct, but more important they are mediated by other factors, such as knowledge and sophistication. Second, social scientific studies trying to find out the causes behind people's attitudes and behavior should keep in mind that the causes can be very different for different people. Thus concepts which can help us to categorize the public into groups would help the search of causes.

Of course, the media effects should be understood in the context. There are particular characteristics of the Hong Kong society and politics that favor the existence of media effects. First, not only the public relies heavily on the media to learn about politics, but also the political parties and candidates are heavily reliant on the media, due to the general lack of strong ties between the parties and the public (this is especially problematic for the democrats). Thus we can expect the media to be a more important mobilizing agent in Hong Kong than their counterparts in other societies. Second, democracy is under development in recent years. People did not turn political participation or behavior into habits. This is a condition allowing various agents, including the media, to have more power in influencing the public. Obviously, if going out to vote (or abstention) has become a habit, no agent is likely to have strong influence on it. Also related to the short history of democracy in Hong Kong is the less stable and established political attitudes, values and beliefs, which also allow various agents to enjoy greater influence. Lastly, the 1998 election is the first one after the handover. The historical specificity of the election makes all the remaining fixed attitudes and beliefs less applicable. People are more likely to "start from scratch," searching for information and formulating evaluations and making behavioral decisions anew.

After all the analysis, now the question is: How the effects discovered can be understood? Can we find the causes behind the effects from content? Also, what are the normative implications of the effects found? We see that media have direct negative effects on some attitudes and turnout, but have positive effects on

knowledge, which in turn helps the turnout rate. Up to this time, what can be argued is that media have both desirable and undesirable effects regarding its role of activating informed participation.

However, the implications are not at all clear. Media do have positive effects on knowledge, but it can also be argued that media effects on knowledge are not really meaningful in the sense that all kinds of communication probably lead to knowledge increase. It does not tell us whether media have given enough and important information to the public because of the failure to establish knowledge domains in the survey in March. Without a basis of comparison we also do not know whether media have realized their full potential in informing the public. Moreover, the knowledge gap phenomenon demonstrated in Chapter 6 calls for concern about to what extent the less sophisticated people can really learn from the media.

On the other hand, media negative effects on voter turnout call for concern. But if the cause behind the negative effects is not ascertained, it would be very difficult to discuss the implications of the effects.

Faced with the uncertainties of the causes and implications of the effects found, the next chapter will give a brief but systematic analysis of media content, focusing on the notion of strategic coverage, to provide empirical cues and basis for the discussions of effects, and the media performance regarding their role to activate informed participation.

IX. The pitfalls of strategic coverage: How media fall short from activating informed participation

Previous chapters have analyzed the media effects on knowledge, attitudes, and turnout in the 1998 election. But how can we connect the effects and media's role of activating informed participation together? To answer this question and to provide some further context for the effect study, analyzing media content will be useful. It can give an empirical basis for the discussion of the reasons behind and the implications of the effects.

Ming Pao and *Apple Daily* are chosen for analysis. The focus on newspapers is due to the fact that they carry the largest amount of election information during the campaign. And the two newspapers are chosen to represent the elite and mass newspapers respectively. As explained in Chapter 4, the analysis will not be a comprehensive one. It will be a systematic analysis on a specific theme – strategic coverage by the media. Strategic coverage is one of the most prominent themes established in past studies on media's election coverage. It refers to the tendency of the media to focus on candidates' campaign strategies, their mutual attack and conflicts, and their chances of winning in an election (Patterson, 1980; Joslyn, 1984; Cavanaugh, 1995; Cappella and Jamieson, 1997). I just use the term "strategic coverage" to denote the phenomenon. This kind of coverage assumes that politicians are selfish actors with winning as their only aim. This interpretation is not an explicit one written-down or a conclusion drawn from neutral observations or in-depth analysis, but it underlies journalists' construction of news stories (Cappella and Jamieson, 1997). Strategic coverage also characterizes media coverage of other political issues (Jamieson and Cappella, 1998). Generally speaking, we can identify two aspects of strategic coverage: 1) in terms of information, it focuses on campaign information rather than issue information, 2) in terms of narrative, news stories are written in a way that is similar to reports of sports, wars, or other kinds of games and

contests, and interpretations about candidates' actions and intentions are suggested implicitly or even explicitly.

It should be reminded that the present study does not have the design to demonstrate the empirical linkage between content and effects, but arguments about the linkage are helped by past research in related areas. The connection between strategic coverage and media effects in the present study will be discussed after analyzing the content. Here suffice it to say that strategic coverage is one of the most likely causes behind some effects found in the data analysis, especially the negative effects of media consumption on turnout.

Prominence of strategic coverage in Hong Kong

Let us start with the most basic question: Is strategic coverage of election prominent in the 1998 LegCo election? As there is no comprehensive content analysis carried out, the precise extent of strategic coverage cannot be established. But we can have a rough assessment of it. Starting from February 2, *Ming Pao* established weekly special page (later turned more frequently) for the coverage of the upcoming election. During February to April, the special page was included mainly on Monday only. On other days during the week news about the upcoming election was put into the political news page. In this period, the special election page usually focused on a certain theme. From the selection of the themes we can get a view of what the focus of coverage was.

From February 2 to April 29 there were altogether 20 special pages²⁶. Table 9.1 summarizes the themes²⁷. The table shows the nature of the coverage on the page. The nature is strategic if the theme is campaign strategies, inter- and intra-party conflicts, or poll results showing candidates' support. It is issue coverage if the theme

²⁶ A special page is recognized as one which has a heading of "changing situation of the election war" at the top of the page.

²⁷ The table stops at 29/4 because starting from 30/4 *Ming Pao* has the special election page

is about candidates issue stands, past records of the parties on working on public affairs, or polls about substantive concerns like the people's issue agenda. There is a third category named "strategic-issue" representing the coverage in which a large volume of substantive information included but are put into a strategic narrative (which is to be discussed later).

Table 9.1 Themes of special page coverage of Ming Pao: Feb 2 to April 29

	Strategy	Issue	Strategy-issue
2/2: Intra-party conflicts	Y		
9/2: Party leaders' chances of winning	Y		
16/2: Participation of members of the Executive Council		Y	
23/2: Xinhua News Agency	Undefined		
2/3: Poll results for the newest standings in the race	Y		
9/3: Parties' and candidates' financial resources	Y		
16/3: Liberal Party in functional constituencies elections	Y		
23/3: Kowloon West constituency	Y		
29/3: Poll results about the current standings	Y		
30/3: Democratic Party's strategy to attack opponents on participating in Provisional Legislature			Y
6/4: New Territories East constituency			Y
10/4: Application as candidates – event report	Y		
13/4: Hong Kong Island constituency			Y
14/4: Kowloon East constituency			Y
20/4: New Territories West race	Y		
25/4: Kowloon West constituency	Y		
25/4: Functional constituencies	Y		
26/4: Withdrawal of candidates due to nationality problem	Y		
29/4: Poll results about the current standings	Y		

Two things can be noted. First, strategic topics are focused more than substantive topics (13:1, and 13:5 even including strategic-issue into issue category). It may be argued that in February and March candidates did not have much substantive information to offer. However, this is not a perfect reason, as journalists could have tried to investigate and raise substantive issues themselves. Also, substantive information was not always non-existent but only not treated as the most important aspect in coverage. For instance on March 2 *Ming Pao* reported the results of a poll conducted by CUHK. The poll asked questions including the criteria the respondents will use to choose among candidates and the issues that the

respondents think are more imminent to Hong Kong. These questions can be considered as more important as they are related to the society's understanding of a good leader and the public's agenda. However, they are put only at the bottom of the page and journalists did not try to follow the result and question various candidates and parties about their views upon the society's understanding of a good politician and the public's agenda.

Second, into late March and early April *Ming Pao* covered the race in the five geographical constituencies separately. But the coverage was, again, largely focused on campaign strategies or using a strategic framework to compare candidates' issue stands. Candidates' issue stands were dubbed as "selling points." Focus was on how candidates tried to win the election by adopting strategies. Thus, issue stands, background and past performances were equated with campaign strategies.

Starting from April 30 *Ming Pao's* special election page became organized by individual stories. A simple way to look at the general picture of coverage in this later period is to look at the headline story on every special page. Coverage on May 19, 20 and 23 are not available, and there are totally 22 special page headline stories in the whole period. Eight of them are about functional constituency election. Four are controversies in other aspects of the election²⁸. One story is about the election committee. There are four stories about candidate debates. However, among them one is actually about how a debate was cancelled due to lack of audience. Another has virtually no issue content, while the remaining two are written in the way that, again, issue and substantive information are put into a strategic narrative.

Two stories are about conflicts among candidates. One is about a candidate's suspected lying on her educational background. One is a poll report. The one on May

²⁸ They are the British embassy contacted candidates in the election and aroused the Chinese government's criticism, controversy about the electoral arrangements, area for campaigning on election day, and arrangements of voting stations.

18 is the only piece that can be said as substantive. It is an article about Kowloon East candidates' various issue stands and the article is free from strategic implications. Thus, we can see that even into May *Ming Pao* did not give emphasis on more substantive issues.

What about *Apple Daily*? We can construct a similar analysis on its election coverage. But unlike *Ming Pao*, *Apple Daily* did not publish special page regularly until April. Summarizing the headline stories of the special page starting from April 12, there are altogether 43 stories²⁹. The stories are then classified into issue stories, strategy stories, strategy-issue, functional constituencies/election committee, and others. The first three categories are defined as discussed above, the fourth category includes all news coverage about functional constituency or election committee elections no matter how the news is covered, the fifth is a residual category including topics like government actions etc.

The result is that among the 43 stories, 17 can be classified as strategic coverage. These articles included topics like using the Internet for campaign promotion, mutual attacks on violating election rules regarding campaigning, polls reports etc. Only one is classified as issue coverage, which was on May 16. The topic is the public's most concerned issues. Four are classified as strategy-issue coverage, which, as explained above, has covered candidates' issue stands but the coverage was put into a strategic framework so that the issue stands become strategies themselves. There are 10 stories about the functional constituencies and election committee and the remaining 11 were unclassified as they are about other aspects of the election.

From the sketch we can argue that strategic coverage is largely present on the two newspapers in the 1998 LegCo election. Following past research, we can suspect that strategic coverage is at least part of the reason for some media effects

²⁹ Some days have more than one headline story since election news was covered in more than one page, and May 3, 17, 22 and 23 are missing from the analysis since the newspapers on those days are

found in previous chapters, like its negative effects on turnout and some of the attitudinal variables.

However, to further support the claim that strategic coverage has led to undesirable impacts, we can have a closer look at the textual features of the coverage. The question is: Which aspects or characteristics of strategic coverage would likely have caused problems to informed participation?

Before going on, a note should be added about another possible reason behind the negative media effects on turnout. It has been pointed out in Chapter 4 that some people may think the election is undemocratic and illegitimate. An implication is that media may have negative effects on turnout because of their portrayal of the election as undemocratic, or because of their coverage of the controversies surrounding the legitimacy question. This counter-argument is very important since if it is true, the apparently undesirable negative media effects on turnout suddenly become not so undesirable, and for people who believe the election as illegitimate, the negative effects may even become desirable.

However, from the analysis of media content, the author does not see much discussion and criticisms towards the undemocratic character of the election by the media. It does not mean criticisms were absent. But the amount of criticisms did not attain the level of conspicuity that makes it as probable as strategic coverage to be a reason behind the negative effects. Actually, from what has been mentioned, the two newspapers gave considerable coverage of the functional constituencies election and election committee during the campaign period. And the overall tone of the coverage was not specifically critical. Thus, it seems that media's criticisms of the legitimacy of the election are not likely to be the main cause of effects.

Also, if media's criticisms of the legitimacy of the election is the main reason behind, the media coverage and knowledge should have negative effects not only on turnout but also election performance. However, what have been shown in previous

chapters are media coverage's negative effects on turnout as well as knowledge's negative effects on parties performance evaluation. Strategic coverage is surely in a better position to account for this particular combination of effects.

As noted above strategic coverage has two main characteristics. One is related to the amount of information and the other to the way information is presented in a narrative. In the following, textual analysis will be employed to demonstrate more closely the problems involved in the coverage. They include how strategic coverage denatures candidates' actions, how strategic narrative drives out substantive information, and how the narrative devalues substantive information.

The author reads all the newspaper articles about the direct election from Feb 2 to May 24 on the two newspapers and come up with the themes presented below. The examples given are often the more illustrative cases that are representative of the themes. They cannot tell the precise extent to which the three themes are present in a quantitative sense, but it can be argued that the themes are present to a considerable extent that deserves our attention.

Denaturing actions and events

By denaturing candidates' actions I mean the media cover candidates' actions in a way that the original intentions or meanings are replaced by strategic interpretations. Of course, it is difficult to know the original intentions and meanings of candidates' actions. However, journalists cannot assume they know them either. While some scholars argue that journalists making interpretations are not desirable (Patterson, 1994), others think that interpretations are inevitable (Page, 1996). Nevertheless, we can at least argue that whenever interpretations are suggested they must be well-reasoned and substantiated in a way that no obvious information is lacking and no other obvious alternative interpretation is neglected.

Coverage of intra-party conflicts and the resulting change of different politicians' election strategies have dominated the election coverage in February and early

March. This domination *per se* is not the whole problem. There were really a lot of intra-party conflicts in February resulting in disturbances within various parties. In covering these stories, strategic interpretations are usually the easiest way to explain politicians' actions. Of course, in most of the cases the strategic concerns of the parties and politicians were actually conceded by the politicians themselves. Nevertheless, there were still cases in which strategic interpretations were imposed on politicians.

The most obvious case was *Ming Pao's* coverage of the withdrawal of Chow Kit-bing from the Liberal Party (LP). She held a press conference to announce her withdrawal decision due to Wong Ying-kei's return and LP's arrangement. She refused LP's offer for her to enter the LegCo through election committee and decided to enter the direct election as an independent. On February 27, *Ming Pao*, besides covering the press conference, had another article titled "pushing forward by stepping backward, gaining an excellent image," in which Chow's "strategy" was explained,

Chow Kit-bing decided to withdraw from the LP, losing the brandname of the party, but gaining the media's spotlight, and also establishing an image of insisting on principles and ideals. For "sister Bing," she has all the reasons to "gamble."

.....

Now "sister Bing" announced withdrawal, but she became the focus of media. She showed the posture of insisting on principle but not accepted by her party. It may help her to win the "sympathetic votes" from some people.

On February 28 there was another article on the same issue written in a largely similar way. A simple question: does Chow have "all the reasons to gamble"? If every politicians' goal is only to win the election, then the best way for Chow perhaps is to accept the offer to enter through the election committee, as polls results showed that she had an extremely slim chance to win in the geographical constituencies.

If we still insist on strategic interpretation, can we argue that Chow's decision was driven by a long-term strategic concern? It is possible. But this possibility only

demonstrates one particular trouble (or advantage for news writers) of strategic coverage – one can always find strategic interpretations of politicians' actions. Furthermore, even if Chow was really posturing as insisting on principles, Chow's action was still consistent with what is expected to be in the public interest. That is, a politician should respect direct election rather than trying to gain seats through undemocratic means, and should be responsible for the citizens in his/her own constituency. In other words, no matter what is the intention behind, Chow has done the "right" thing. As a result of strategic interpretation, *Ming Pao* failed to differentiate actions that are consistent with the public interest and those that are not.

It should be admitted that this kind of explicit strategic interpretations of candidates' actions is rare. After all, journalists uphold norms of objectivity and neutrality. They do not often get into explicit analysis and interpretations. But by selecting focus and information to report, and by using a certain narrative, candidates' actions can also be denatured.

We can turn to media coverage of candidate debates. In an ideal election, what candidates will do is to propound their policy platforms and then rationally discuss and debate about them. Candidate debates become a site for this kind of meaningful confrontation. In reality, however, candidates may spend time on attacking others, and in their attack they may resort to emotional and polemical strategies. Actually, the line between emotional attack and rational debate is difficult to draw. However, journalists, by their strategic coverage, may exaggerate the attack character. We can look at two cases of headline coverage of debates.

On May 1, debates in the Hong Kong Island constituency was covered on *Ming Pao* titled "Martin Lee was absent, Yeung Sum became the target." The article paid emphasis on the strategic aspect and used the language of a competition.

.....The leading candidate on Democratic Party (DP) Hong Kong Island's candidate list, party leader Martin Lee, was absent in yesterday's election forum, but his past comments became the focus of opponents' criticisms.

Yeung Sum [vice-chairman of DP], who participated the forum, had to “avoid the serious,” not to argue with opponents about Lee’s past comments.

Right from the beginning of the forum, which was staged at the Charter Garden in Central, DP’s Yeung Sum first attacked DAB on issues of democracy, freedom, human rights and rule of law. Christine Loh also grasped the opportunity to enter the fray, she pointed out that the LegCo in the colonial era failed to pass the bill on forbidding age discrimination. At that time LP did not support this bill, she requested ex-LP’s member Chow Kit-bing to explain.....

On *Apple Daily* we can see a similar phenomenon. When a New Territories East election forum was reported on April 30 as the top story, the title was “Scramble in New Territories forum produced sparks.” And the leading paragraph was written as,

Although there is still some days before the LegCo election, New Territories East forum is filled with the smell of explosives. After DP and DAB’s “firing” last time, yesterday NT East candidates “scramble” again on the forum. There was even the scene in which democrats “bomb” each other.

These articles may not have failed in including substantive information, although, as will be argued later, the strategic narrative restricted the amount and depth of information conveyed. More important here is that they are written in a way like a report of a war or a game, with descriptions of candidates’ attack and defense, with words like attack, fray, bomb, firing, explosives etc., organizing the flow of the narrative. Strategies used in debate are pointed out. Candidate actions are interpreted within the overall framework.

It should be pointed out that debates are covered as a battlefield not only when they were the headline, but their chances to become headline stories largely increase when they allowed journalists to identify and amplify the conflictual aspects of the debate. In general, newspapers tended to characterize debates and forums as battlefields rather than a stage for communication and discussion. And some debates, due to the presence of elements which particularly fit such a characterization, gained more prominence. The conflictual aspect often becomes the organizing theme or even the sole matter in coverage. In reporting the debates, the

media may have even “created” the conflicts. It is not to argue that candidate debates by themselves are fully rational, but it can still be argued that the media had distorted the meaning of, that is, denatured, debates.

Narrative construction: how strategic coverage force out substantive information

Previous studies have pointed out that in strategic coverage substantive information is lacking. Here we can look more closely at how strategic information is being omitted. The first way by which strategic coverage undermines the amount of substantive information is simply the selection of news topics. Earlier analysis has already pointed to this.

The second way to exclude substantive information is related to narrative construction. News articles are stories. In telling stories journalists use the information at hand to make a coherent account of events and issues. Thus the choices of information to include are not random, but affected by the “narrative relevance” of the information. There are two kinds of choices to be made in constructing a narrative: paradigmatic and syntagmatic choices. Paradigmatic choices refer to the choosing of semantic units from a number of potential units that can be used in the same position. Thus a debate can be characterized as a discussion, debate, forum, battlefield, competition, etc. Also, paradigmatic choices do not refer to separate decisions in the choice of word, it is a decision to choose a “paradigm” of words and elements. Thus, if the word battlefield is chosen in the above example it usually implies choosing words like fire, bomb, explosives in subsequent decisions. Syntagmatic choices refer to the decisions about how to combine and connect different elements and units in a text. These two concepts can help us to analyze media texts and in this section it will be shown that the syntagmatic characteristics of a strategic narrative will undermine the amount and depth of substantive information and analysis.

Into March and April, political parties and candidates started to finalize and

announce their election platforms. Covering these announcements offered media a chance to report some substantive information. However, journalists, with their eyes on the strategic aspects, often fail to provide both width and depth of substantive information. The following is an example on *Apple Daily* on April 17,

Frontier announces election platform, first time announcing livelihood issue stands

Frontier announced their 98 election platform yesterday. The content includes old-age pension scheme which was once opposed by leader Emily Lau. Lee Cheuk-yan, also general secretary of CTU, emphasized that the platform was decided by a general meeting, there was no "face-off" situations during the discussion process.

The platform is the first time that Frontier discloses its stands on livelihood and economic issues, like using "old-age money" system as the primary and "compulsory retirement saving scheme" the secondary methods for retirement protection, against labor importation, and support increase in fees on public services should be checked by LegCo.

However, Emily Lau once supported government to set compulsory retirement saving scheme in LegCo, and opposed to Lee Cheuk Yan's "old-age money" system (continue to focus on how Emily Lau's has voted against other democrats' proposals in the past).....

(fourth paragraph on possible contradiction and problem of implementation).....

The platform of Frontier still has "China's democratization" as its large premise. They request re-evaluation of June Fourth. Regarding constitution, [they] request full participation by the public and re-enacting the Basic Law. Executive committee member Ho Sau-lan said that the platform only "says what it says," there is no intention to pressurize other democrats.

(sixth paragraph on who participation in which district's election).....

The article is cited at length because it can allow us to see how the six paragraphs are organized. The writer has chosen two things to include in the lead paragraph – Emily Lau's apparent change in issue stand and the question of internal conflicts. It sets the tone of the whole article. The second paragraph introduces Frontier's issue stands on some livelihood issues. After this paragraph, the article can go two ways. One is to go deeper into the livelihood issue stands. However, the

third paragraph follows the lead paragraph's direction instead, talking about Emily Lau's voting record, especially the conflicts between her and some of the democrats. This turn has not totally forbidden the further analysis of issue information. As the conflicts can also be seen as meaningful since voters can see from the record how Emily Lau has acted in the past. But with the focus on strategy, the reason why Lau has seemingly changed her stands and why she was in conflict with some other democrats were not discussed. At the end, the public only knows a few issue stands on a very superficial level. Actually people without relevant background knowledge may simply cannot make sense of "old age money," "compulsory retirement saving scheme" etc. Then, the fifth paragraph talks about the political stands of Frontier. Again, what follows the simple introduction of issue stands is a question on whether Frontier is giving pressure to other democrats.

On the whole, the article was organized with the strategic focus always behind. In-depth analysis and wide coverage of substantive information are lacking as the syntax of the coverage is "issue stands, strategic implication of issue stands" rather than "issue stands, elaboration/analysis of issue stands."

With a few exceptions, the commonality about the articles on candidates' platforms is that the strategic focus can be seen by looking at the "syntax" of the article, that is, the flow from the title to the lead paragraph and to others. Issue information is contained in these reports in varying degrees, but always subject to the restrictions imposed by the strategic focus working through the syntagmatic choices made.

Another example showing how important information is omitted in a strategic narrative is about candidates' mutual attack. Throughout the election, this kind of mutual attacks on issue stands and past records often appeared. And due to the conflictual character of these events they often got media's attention.

An illustrative case is that DP's chairman Martin Lee was accused as having made the statement years ago that "even one cent should not be left to the future

SAR government.” Martin Lee had denied he had ever made such a statement. On May 10 *Ming Pao* reported that DAB’s vice-chairman Cheng Kai-nam pointed out the statement was reported on April 8, 1991 and he has already found the news report on that day. However, the reporter did not try to prove whether the news report mentioned by Cheng can really be found.

The obvious possible way to settle down this kind of controversies is to check the record, to see whether the criticisms are consistent with facts, and then give the involved politicians chances to explain. However, the situation of the two reports is that journalists failed to do the job of confirmation and verification. For the readers, after all the mutual attacks by the politicians, they still did not know whether Martin Lee has really made certain statements in what kind of contexts. At the end, the readers only know the candidates are attacking each other but without any idea of the validity of the attacks. Put into the context of strategic narrative construction, the syntax is “attack, defense, counter-attack,” rather than “attack, defense, and verification.”

Devaluing substantive information in strategic coverage

In strategic coverage, substantive information may not be totally absent. However, their values have been changed, because they become strategies. They are posited in the election campaign in a way not different from other strategies used by the candidates.

Issue stands may be treated as strategies explicitly or implicitly. As have been noted, explicit interpretation of issue stands as strategies is rare, but it is not absent. For example, in early March a prominent Chinese politician attacked RTHK as antagonistic to the Hong Kong SAR government despite its public broadcasting nature. The comments immediately aroused heated debate about issues ranging from editorial autonomy of RTHK to freedom of expression in Hong Kong. On March 27, *Ming Pao* reported that various parties have prepared their platforms on the issue

for the debate in the coming week's meeting in the Provisional Legislature. Titled "parties commenting on RTHK, preparing dubs for the election," the lead paragraph of the article was written as:

The Provisional Legislature will debate about editorial autonomy of RTHK next Wednesday. It becomes the arena for political parties to prepare "bullets" for the election in May. The four biggest parties [in the Provisional Legislature] will give their own proposals with unique wordings in order to avoid supporting their "enemies" on this sensitive issue.

The coverage did convey issue information to the public. However, by using strategic interpretations the importance of the issue information was undermined. The interpretations would distract readers' attention to the substance of the debate towards the strategic aspect. It also conveyed the impression that political parties' issue stands do not deserve our serious attention because they are only "bips" and "bullets" for winning in an election.

The same situation exists even the media did not explicitly interpret candidate issue stands as strategies. It is because any information will derive its meaning from the narrative within which it is embedded. Take the following example from *Apple Daily* on April 17.

DAB's New Territories East candidate Lau Kong-wah frequently started attack in a election forum yesterday, trying to arouse the enmity between Frontier and DP. Later DP's Cheng Kar-foo retributed, teased Lau Kong-wah's move from the Hong Kong Democratic Union to DAB as changing political stand.

The election forum was held in CUHK's so-called "fire-stand" yesterday afternoon, the candidates of the six lists directly face-off for the first time. Fire is everywhere, reflecting the intense battle in NT East constituency.

.....

Later Cheng Kar-foo pointed the gun at Lau Kong-wah, teased him as a "waving man, entering a waving party." Lau Kong-wah accused Cheng Kar-foo destroying the rule of law though being a lawyer and always vowing for the rule of law. For righteousness Citizens Party's candidate Liu Yat-ming pointed out that Cheng only challenged unreasonable phenomenon, and he

was never convicted.

As pointed out earlier, strategic coverage does not exclude all substantive information. First, there is Lau's past record as a member of HKDU (which later became DP) but later became the leader of the Civil Force, and then joined DAB. Second, there is also Cheng's record as an activist in civil protests and has been arrested by the police but was never convicted. Although there is the information, but the meaning is different when they are put into the context of the news article from when they are laid out just as they are. The article has the narrative feature that turns the factual information into strategies used by candidates. In terms of paradigmatic choice, words like "face-off," "retribute," etc., are used instead of "come together," "response," etc. It has already been pointed that this paradigmatic choice is a choice of a paradigm of words and we can describe the paradigm chosen by the above example as the "war paradigm." Then, other items in the narrative, even though they may not be elements of a war when taken separately, acquire this meaning when in such a narrative. In this way the information becomes "bullets" even when they are not explicitly interpreted as such.

In terms of syntagmatic choice, the above example is organized as "attack, counter-attack" instead of "attack, response, elaboration/fact." Factual information does not have a chance to leave the attack-counter-attack framework and stands on its own. Thus, in the above example, the fact is not "Lau has changed his party membership in the past" but "Cheng accused Lau for changing his party membership." Therefore, embedded in strategic narrative, substantive information loses its use value to the voters, because information is not differentiated from strategies, or even becomes strategies.

Some overall comments on strategic coverage

Generally speaking, past studies have already pointed out that strategic coverage is characterized by the lack of substantive information and an *a priori*

cynical interpretation of candidates actions and campaign events in terms of strategies. What the above analysis achieved is to show in a more detailed way how strategic coverage “succeeds” in limiting the amount of useful information given to the public and changing the meaning of candidates actions, campaign events and turning substantive information into strategies³⁰.

Patterson (1980; 1994) suggests that the strategic perspective is the result of the fact that campaign issues are colorful, unexpected and unique, which make them conform to news values. Campaign issues also create suspense and expectation as they unfold, and they provide the media the power to control the agenda. Gitlin (1991) points to the norm of objectivity, arguing that journalists' fear of being accused as being not objective drive them to cover the most uncontroversial and “objective” aspect of politics – politicians' strategies³¹. Zaller (1998) suggests the “product substitution hypothesis” on journalists' coverage of election campaign news. He argues that journalists do not like to be manipulated by candidates and thus if they perceive the candidates as trying to manipulate them, they will response in giving negative coverage of the candidates. Thus the harder the candidates try to sell his/her image, the more negative the media are.

We cannot determine the extent to which the various explanations apply in Hong Kong. Probably an explanation of the causes behind strategic coverage in Hong Kong have to take into account the news value of Hong Kong journalists and the journalistic work routines in Hong Kong. Suffice it to say that the a further step in the “horizontalization” of media research³² is to link media content analysis with the

³⁰ It can be argued that the result of strategic coverage is not only the undermining of the availability and importance of substantive information but also the importance of strategies. As argued above election is a competition and strategies are an indispensable part of it. Having strategic concerns and aiming at winning the election are not anti-democratic, only those strategies that violate the rule of competition in an election campaign, and those strategies which are against the public interest, are undesirable and should be condemned. However, in the strategic coverage demonstrated above, all strategies are treated alike. In this way the media fail to differentiate different strategies and their different legitimacies.

³¹ This argument is similar to Lemert's (1977, 1981) discussion on mobilizing information. Lemert argued that the media fail to carry mobilizing information, which is essential for political participation, due to the norm of objectivity.

sociological analysis of journalistic work, and a particular question in adopting a normative framework in analyzing media is to see the difference between the normative values and the practical news values.

From the content analysis we can see the possible explanation for some media effects that are found in previous chapters. Most important, media consumption's negative effects on voter turnout can be explained as the demobilization effects of media's strategic coverage. Voters refrain from voting due to the recognition that politicians are selfish and are not intended to help. Further, we may suspect whether strategic coverage has undermined the potential positive effects of knowledge on voter turnout. As discussed in Chapter 8, the content of knowledge, if having a large proportion of strategic information, may have led to a negative effect on turnout, undermining the positive effects of knowing.

The overwhelming presence of candidates' mutual attack and conflicts could also explain knowledge negative effects on parties' performance evaluation. However, remember that the relationship between knowledge and attitudes towards parties is positive in March. This is probably because at March media did not give salient coverage for the election while parties continued to feature in other political news coverage, which has a legitimization effect (Fung, 1995; 1998). Thus election coverage in February, though negative and strategic in nature, did not lead to effects of knowledge on party attitudes. The situation is different in June. Also, the June survey asked respondents to specifically rate performance in election, which is different from the general attitudes measured in March.

Audience perception of media performance

Before concluding on strategic coverage, two complications have to be taken into account. It is argued that media have focused on strategies and unimportant aspects of the election, and there was a lack of substantive information. But do the readers' judgment of media performance consistent with the judgment put forward so

far in this chapter.

In the June survey respondents were asked to evaluate media performance in providing information. They were asked whether they think the media have given enough issue information, strategy information, polling information, candidate background information, and information about the electoral system. A question about the usefulness of the information given by the media was also included. Table 9.2 gives the summary of results.

Table 9.2 Respondents' evaluations of media performance in providing information to the public

	Issue info.	Strategic info.	Background info.	Polling info.	Info. of electoral system		Usefulness of information (1)
Seriously not enough	1.2% (6)	0.6% (3)	0.6% (3)	0.9% (4)	3.2% (16)	Very not useful	2.0% (11)
Not enough	17.7% (88)	30.1% (151)	30.3% (143)	21.0% (90)	31.8% (158)	Not useful	14.1% (77)
Just right	73.1% (364)	66.9% (335)	66.3% (313)	72.7% (312)	61.8% (307)	So-so	33.8% (185)
Too much	8.0% (40)	2.4% (12)	2.8% (13)	5.4% (23)	3.2% (16)	Useful	44.1% (241)
						Very useful	6.0% (33)
Entries are valid percentage and number of cases							

The answers to these questions, as shown in the table, are inconsistent with what the analysis of media content suggested. Respondents were generally satisfied with media performance regarding information provision. And the provision of issue information even becomes the most satisfactory aspect among the five. Only 88 respondents thought there was not enough issue information and 6 thought that there was a serious lack of it.

This inconsistency between researcher's and the public's judgment is not particular to the present case. A similar situation is also largely present in the US. For instance, while some scholars continually argue for the lack of substance in election coverage in the US (Patterson, 1980; 1994; Leovy, 1994), there are others argue that

the public themselves are not so dis-satisfied. Therefore, the media should be considered as having already done a decent job (Graber, 1994b).

The problem here is to what extent we should rely on the public's own judgment on media performance. The problem is very complicated and has very important implications to how we view the public opinion process in a democratic society. It could be argued that the public may not be a good judge, and especially in a society like Hong Kong where a civic culture is still under development, the public may not be sophisticated enough in making reasonable and sound judgment. Certainly, this argument is likely to be criticized as too elitist, and we have no way to prove whether this elitist view is right.

But from the data we have, we can pursue two further points. First, the public may not be able to differentiate the different kinds of information as the researcher has separated. This problem is similar to the discussion of knowledge domain in Chapter 6. If the public cannot differentiate the different kinds of information, then what Table 9.2 has shown is only a general satisfaction on media's performance. The difference between satisfactions with issue and strategy information is not very meaningful. This view is supported by reliability analysis and factor analysis. The reliability among the five media evaluation variables is 0.61, and the factor analysis ends with only one single factor. These figures show that the respondents did not display significant differences in their answers towards these five questions.

Also, it may be argued that while many respondents are satisfied with the coverage, those who are more attentive, interested, and knowledgeable would find substantive information lacking. From Table 9.3 we can see that people dis-satisfied with the amount of issue and background information are likely to be more attentive to news and more knowledgeable, though they may not be more interested in politics. However, people satisfied with and dis-satisfied with strategy and polling information do not differ. These point to the argument that a lack of issue and background information is the opinion of those who really concern and are more informed.

Table 9.3 T-tests on the differences of people satisfied and dis-satisfied with media

		News attention	Political interests	Knowledge
Issue info.	Not enough	3.40	3.14	9.67
	Enough	3.26	3.14	8.27
	Difference	0.14*	0.00	1.40**
Strategy info.	Not enough	3.33	3.14	8.98
	Enough	3.26	3.12	8.15
	Difference	0.07	0.02	0.83*
Back. info.	Not enough	3.37	3.21	9.47
	Enough	3.23	3.08	7.94
	Difference	0.14*	0.13*	1.53***
Polling info.	Not enough	3.38	3.05	8.43
	Enough	3.29	3.17	8.65
	Difference	0.10	-0.12	-0.22
Info. Of electoral system	Not enough	3.28	3.10	8.91
	Enough	3.30	3.11	8.46
	Difference	-0.02	-0.01	0.45*

Notes:
 Entries are scores on the original scales of the variables.
 The "not enough" group includes answers "not enough" and "seriously not enough."
 Respondents answered "too much" are excluded for simplicity.
 *** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.10$

In sum, while the public's judgment may be different from researchers' analysis, the public's judgment should be taken with caution. It is a question to what extent the public's judgment should be relied on. Also, the public may not possess the categories that researchers used in their analysis, and the answers should be analyzed in more details to see how people come up their evaluations³². The above discussion certainly did not totally solve the problem of public's judgment. But for the present purpose, they support the argument that the general public's satisfaction with media performance regarding information provision is not enough to defy the conclusion of the earlier content analysis.

³² Communication research has shown that people's judgment of media performance is subject to the influence of one's underlying attitudes and values. A well-known example is the hostile media phenomenon (Vallone et al., 1985) – people supporting one side of an issue think that the media are biased towards the other side, and people supporting the other side also think that the media are biased against them. Therefore, public's judgment of media performance is something to be studied rather than taken for granted (Kressel, 1993).

Another argument relevant to media performance is that media may have failed to cover the election substantively just because there is no substance to cover. Actually, for some observers of the 1998 election the election itself is devoid of important issues. Then, strategic coverage would become not the fault of the media, but politicians and/or the whole political environment.

However, a brief analysis of TV candidate debates suggests otherwise. TV debates are a part of media content. But different from news reports, journalists do not have as large an extent of content control. Debates, together with phone-in talk shows and political advertising etc, can be classified as "candidate-controlled communication" (Just *et al.*, 1996). These channels are characterized by lower levels of "mediation," which can be defined as a process in which the original message is reshaped and its meanings altered as a result (Zaller and Hunt, 1994). In this sense, TV debates are a place where candidates can get their message across in a more direct way. As candidates are more autonomous on these "platforms," we can have a rough assessment of candidates' performance in the election, and this assessment can serve as a reference point in discussing about media's strategic coverage.

Both RTHK, ATV, and Cable TV organized debates during the 1998 election. Only RTHK's debates will be analyzed³³. RTHK has organized altogether 15 TV debates for the direct elections, which totally amounted to 10 hours of programming. Every geographical constituency has one one-hour debate and two half-an-hour question and answer sessions. On the whole, the formats of RTHK's TV debates fit

³³ The five forums organized by ATV have fewer audiences when compared with RTHK's debate since they were shown in the afternoon and after mid-night on Sundays. Cable TV has organized totally 450 minutes of debates for the geographical and the function constituencies. These debates are also excluded since the penetration of Cable TV is still limited in Hong Kong, as only about 360,000 households in Hong Kong have subscribed it. On the other hand, RTHK's 11.5 hours of televised debates were broadcast on TVB's Jade, the most popular television channel, in evening time slots on Saturdays and Sundays. They have attracted an audience of 15 to 18 points, amounted to about 1 million viewers, which is only half the audience size for TVB's primetime soap operas. The comparison between soap operas and debates should not lead us to conclude that debates are meaningless. As pointed out earlier debates organized according to constituencies may restrict the amount of audience since every debate is relevant to audiences only in certain districts.

into the general category of "candidate-controlled communication" due to the small amount of intervention by the media³⁴.

Whether debates can convey meaningful information depends first on the topics discussed. Newspaper coverage was shown to have focused on the strategic aspects of the elections, but TV debates are different. There were more topics on policy issues ranging from current issues like the fall of the property market to long standing controversies like the pace of democratization. We can also hear a considerable number of policy issues that are seldom seriously discussed in Hong Kong, like anti-trust law, minimum wage regulation etc. These issues may fail to become the focus of discussion in the debates, but the debates did provide a platform for different candidates to speak out before the public.

Of course, whether the discussions are meaningful is a question more about the way the candidates discussed. Candidates were less prone to resort to strategic narrative. However, due to their interests in presenting themselves in good light, they will certainly adopt debating strategies. Together with the other restraints, there are severe limitations restricting what debates can achieve and communicate to the

³⁴ At the beginning of the one-hour debate, the supporters of each candidate list had around 10 to 15 seconds for promotion. Then, the host would raise questions for discussions. Candidates answered questions and discussed as they like. The host was responsible for the basic "order" of the discussion. Usually, candidates signaled the hosts and the host would announce which one to speak. However, the host did not control the "order" very strictly. Therefore, candidates' interrupting each other was not uncommon. The host was also responsible for leading the discussion by raising follow-up questions at times.

At the beginning of the third quarter of the one-hour program, the candidates would have time to present themselves by referring to a tool that they selected before the debate. The "tools" were prepared by the programmer and included things ranging from a skeleton to telephone etc.. Together with the supporters' promotion at the beginning of the debate, we can see the entertainment elements injected into the debates. However, the amount of these elements was not overwhelming. Also, even in the "self-presentation with tools" section, candidates may still present serious things regardless the tools in their hands. Debates on various issues continued until the end of the fourth quarter. Time was reserved for conclusions by the candidates.

It can be noted that the host's intervention into the debate process was not very large in the one-hour debate format except the crucial role of "agenda-setting." The host was required to control the flow of the program so that a basic order would be maintained, and several programming necessities were met. Also, the government requested the "equal-time rule" to be observed on the debates, that is, every candidate list should have equal time for speaking. Thus the host had to stop candidates if they have used up the time.

The Q&A sessions further minimized the host's role by letting candidates to raise questions for their opponents. Every candidate list had an equal time period to be questioned, but the "equal-time rule" was not enforced on the questioning side. The host raised questions only if no candidate asked questions. For Kowloon East and West, which had only a few candidate lists, only one Q&A session was organized in the above way. The second had two "public affairs commentators" as guest questioners.

public.

It should be acknowledged that candidates did give some "concrete proposals" on issues. However, as candidates are vying for the seats of LegCo only, the candidates can never promise that the policy can be implemented. They also need to gain their opponents' cooperation if they want to have a chance to force the government in doing something. All candidates, then, have the interest in presenting themselves as willing to cooperate with their opponents. This further blurred the distinctions between the candidates.

If future policy issues were not discussed extensively, voters can count on past records of the candidates to distinguish which one is better. Candidates themselves also recognized the importance of past records and they constantly raised questions to other candidates' past. These discussions constituted the bulk of interactions between the candidates on the TV debates. We can consider the following example:

Lau (DP) :For instance, do you believe the Provisional Legislature have protected the interests of workers? Do you believe the business people would consider?

Wan (DAB) : Mr. Lau. You always say you work for the workers, but in some recent issues we did not notice your presence, including closing of Yaoham's, employees of Wing On Department Store being laid down, and closing of Maria's Bakery. We only see Chan Yuen-han [from the DAB] working for the workers. So are you thinking that you already won the election and do not have to consider labor's rights and their "rice bowls"?

Lau (DP) : Thank you Mr Wan. I am now working on other issues. Those issues [you raised] have other people working on them, thus I work on others. There are many things to do for the labors. The problem is not only a few companies' problems. I appreciate your efforts on them, but.....

Wan (DAB) : In 1996, in the previous LegCo, you proposed to forbid the "hand-dug caisson," that really broke the "rice bowls" of more than 5,000 workers, and make their more than 20,000 family members to "have no rice to eat".....

Lau (DP) : But we cannot ignore the safety issues besides the "rice bowls."

Wan (DAB) :That's not protecting the "rice bowls," that's breaking them.

Lau (DP) : I was afraid that they may even lose their life, they should concern for safety.

Fung (ADPL) : I also want to ask Lau, in previous LegCo, regarding unemployment aids and security ordinance, the DP opposed. That's actually breaking the "rice bowls" of the labors. Especially relevant is the security ordinance. Why didn't you protest at that time and request DP to support our stands?

Lau (DP) : In the security ordinance issue, there is a matter of protecting the aged and the safety issues in this sector. All people know how I voted at that time, I also want to respond to Mr Wan.....

Fung (ADPL) : So how did DP vote?

Lau (DP) : you [Mr Wan] mentioned whether we offer help when several department stores closed, but there also is a related issue, that is collective bargaining. If you have supported collective bargaining, then we can help the labors to negotiate with the company on whether laying down employers is reasonable. But you opposed [collective bargaining]. As a result, employers do not have the chance to negotiate with employees.....

Wan (DAB) : On the issue of "hand-dug caisson," did you seek advice from workers within the sector.....

From the example we can see that there were various issues raised by the parties and past records were the focus of discussion. However, it does not mean that they are discussed in a meaningful way. Actually, due to the hectic exchange between the candidates and the limited time available candidates did not explain clearly and deeply about the issues involved. As a result, unless a viewer has the relevant background knowledge s/he could not understand what the issues "hand-dug caisson," security ordinance, and collective bargaining involve.

Besides, candidates did not have their only goal as engaging in enlightened debate on issues. They had the interests in presenting themselves in good light and attacking others. Thus at various points they just avoided addressing questions directly. Thus Lau said everybody knows how he voted, which the public probably

has never known, and when Fung further questioned the vote of DP, Lau just turned away and started an attack on DAB above their opposition to collective bargaining. DAB's candidate also decided to avoid the question and continued to stress the "hand-dug caisson" issue, which Lau in turn disregarded. As a result, the exchange ended in Lau and Wan's speaking simultaneously, but on different matters.

Another limitation of the debates is that many facts, and sometimes contradictory facts, were claimed by the candidates but remained unverified, like Lau's and DP's voting record in the above example. On the whole, from the debates we see that part of the problem of election communication began from the politicians' side. However, it does not mean that the media are not responsible. Candidates did raise more substantive issues and concerns. And they engaged in some, if not detailed, discussions. Nevertheless, from the newspaper coverage we saw not only the absence of extension of the discussions on issues but an overwhelming coverage of strategies and conflicts. Media's strategic coverage is only partially arising from the lack of substance of the election itself.

Concluding remarks

It has been shown that strategic coverage was largely present on newspapers during the 1998 LegCo election. The problem of strategic coverage was discussed with considerations about the importance of the narrative aspect of the coverage and its consequences on the coverage of substantive information. Three particular themes were discussed. It is contended that strategic coverage deriatures candidates' actions and campaign events, restricts the scope of substantive information included, and transforms the meanings of the information included.

Possible linkages between effects found in previous chapters and strategic coverage are suggested. It may be argued that the media in the 1998 election, though contributed to voter turnout by providing knowledge to the public, can actually do better. In this sense, media have failed to utilize their potential to inform the public.

It should also be noted that informed participation is not only a matter of quantity, that is, amount of information and amount of participation, but also a matter of quality. Thus the media can further contribute to informed political participation by disseminating more substantive and useful information to the public. The effects are not necessarily in the form of increasing the turnout rate but of helping the voters to make an "intelligent choice."

Some alternative arguments are briefly discussed in this chapter. It is pointed out that the alternative explanation of media's negative effects that media demobilized the public by portraying the election as undemocratic is not likely to be valid, since the coverage during the campaign did not provide an extensive discussion on the matter. For strategic coverage itself, it is pointed out that the public's judgment about media performance on providing information is not as negative as the content analysis shows. But it is also argued that the public's judgment should be taken with caution. Finally, a brief analysis of TV debates show that the performance of candidates is partly responsible for the lack of substance of the election coverage. But not all blame can be put on the candidates themselves.

In sum, it is suggested that strategic coverage is a problem in media coverage of 1998 LegCo election. It is also a very probable cause behind some of the media effects found. Then, after all the empirical analysis, what can we conclude about activating informed participation by the media in the 1998 LegCo election in Hong Kong?

X. Conclusion: Mass media and political participation in Hong Kong

Democratization in Hong Kong has been a heated topic of debate and certainly will remain to be in the foreseeable future. As Hong Kong is not an independent polity, democratization has suffered from restraints imposed upon by the Chinese and British governments in the past. According to the Basic Law Hong Kong will not have a fully elected LegCo and a directly elected Chief Executive until after 2007. It even does not need an extremely skeptical person in Hong Kong to doubt whether direct elections of the LegCo and CE will be realized after that year. This is because any suggestions regarding amending the Basic Law, and after 2007, changing the political system of Hong Kong, have to go through a set of procedures that are filled with possibilities of rejection.

On the one hand, the prominence of these structural constraints may have imposed upon the Hong Kong public a kind of inefficacious feeling that discussions on democratization are meaningless. Paradoxically, these structural constraints also make the public voice even more crucial in Hong Kong's quest for a more democratic system. Democratization, when started in the 1980s, was imposed upon by the British government supported only by a certain portion of elites and a minority in the public. But after more than 10 years of development, when the time came to the handover, democratization has already become a goal of the majority. Although the actual content of the concept of democracy may be different in textbooks and in Hong Kong people's mind (see Kuan and Lau, 1995), a political system featured by more institutionalized ways for public opinions expression and a more accountable political leadership are certainly what the public wants.

In a recent article, Kuan (1998) argues that a political society, defined as a space mediating between the state and the civil society, has already been formed in Hong Kong and the Chinese government's wish to de-politicize Hong Kong has

become unrealistic. Democratization has set up its pace and it can at best be tamed but not reversed or destroyed. The development of elections, parties and interest groups are identified as important for further democratization. Kuan (1998) also stated,

the development of the mass media will affect the future health of the political society in Hong Kong. The scope of the public sphere in which political discourse is conducted will shrink to the extent that the freedoms of expression and communication are abridged. (p.1442)

In a broad sense, this study is developed based on the concern for the political development in Hong Kong, especially the role of media in it. It has taken the 1998 LegCo election as a case to see whether media have contributed to electoral participation. The concern regarding media is not the freedom of the press as mentioned by Kuan (1998), though it is undoubtedly important. However, as critiques of media in the developed democracies have pointed out, a free media system does not necessarily contribute to democracy. These criticisms have come from critical scholars who argue that the media are only serving as an arm of the dominant group to rule. But the criticisms have also come from scholars upholding their beliefs in liberal democracies. They pointed out that the media have devalued and trivialized politics by their coverage of political issues and events. This research, following the second line of criticisms, tries to achieve an understanding of to what extent and in what ways the media have contributed to or been detrimental for political participation in Hong Kong.

Media effects in the 1998 election

To evaluate media's role in activating informed participation in the 1998 election, media effects are analyzed to see in what ways media are related to political attitudes, knowledge and voter turnout. On the whole, media do contribute to political knowledge. But the effect on knowledge is significantly larger for the sophisticated group than for the non-sophisticated group, producing a knowledge-gap between the

two groups of people. Media use and knowledge are shown to be related to political attitudes in a relatively limited way. Again, sophisticated and non-sophisticated people exhibit different patterns of relationship among the variables. The sophisticated people have more relationships between knowledge and attitudes than the non-sophisticated ones, suggesting that sophisticated people are not only better able to absorb knowledge from the media but also better able to relate the information to attitudes and evaluations. More specifically, there is a negative relationship between knowledge and evaluations towards the parties at the end of the election, and the finding is consistent with the analysis of media coverage, which suggests that the media have portrayed the candidates and parties in a negative light during the election.

For voter turnout, the logistic regression analysis in Chapter 8 shows that knowledge is positively related to turnout while media use itself is negatively related to turnout. The negative relationship between media use and turnout is larger for the non-sophisticated group.

Thus media in the election have scored both positive and negative points. Media function as an information provider and providing information has helped to increase the voter turnout in the election by making people feel more confident and interested in making a decision. However, media use is also related negatively to turnout, probably through introducing negative affects and feelings towards the election in some of the public's mind. Besides, the benefits of knowledge gained from the media are restricted primarily to the group of people who have the relevant background knowledge and a developed schema in their minds.

Media coverage is then analyzed for giving cues and contexts for understanding the causes and implications of the above effects. The analysis has shown that media have largely focused on the strategic aspects of the election – who is leading, candidates' strategies, campaign events and campaign issues etc. Substantive issues, which may be policy issues, candidates' past performance and records, are

undermined. More important, the "substance" of the election was turned into strategic moves and elements by the coverage.

Is this characterization of the election and the candidates by the media justified? The analysis showed that the newspapers failed to differentiate legitimate strategies from illegitimate ones, they failed to convey important information at certain points and their interpretations were sometimes lack of evidences and facts as grounds. The analysis on candidate debates on television further provides cues to evaluate the media. Candidates did focus more on the substance of election, and although the analysis showed that candidates did not perform perfectly and even showed that candidates may really have many strategic goals, the analysis also pointed out that the journalists do have many potentially "substantive works" to do, like bringing further discussions on the issues raised, verifying candidates' claims on their past performances and records etc.

The need of a more sophisticated public

There are two major concerns raised by the findings. The first is about the public's political sophistication. Unlike early studies about political sophistication in the West (Converse, 1964; 1975), this study does not try to determine how sophisticated the Hong Kong public is. The sophistication index is only the result of an operationalization procedure and we cannot say that a person is sophisticated or not in the absolute sense if s/he gets a score of 6 or 7. But, like many studies on political information processing, this study finds out important differences between the sophisticated and non-sophisticated people in terms of their ability to learn information, ability to relate information to attitudes, and immunity or susceptibility to some media effects.

On the whole, if the Hong Kong public becomes more sophisticated the development of democratic politics will be benefitted. But of course, people's political

sophistication is not something that can be easily enhanced. What can be said is that Hong Kong needs more and better political education for the youngsters.

Political education is sensitive in Hong Kong recently because in the post-handover context political education sometimes has the connotation of being related to government ideological propaganda. But to say political education is needed, I mean an education not aimed at telling people what is right and wrong in political matters, but to induce the people to think about such matters. Actually, one of the problems of Hong Kong's civic education in secondary schools is its emphasis on factual information but not ability to analyze and criticize (Tse, 1997).

Media can also help in this regard by improving their coverage of political matters by inserting more context and background information in their coverage. Of course, increasing the public's sophistication may not be media's most important responsibility, but this study also has called for concern about media's role in political development in Hong Kong.

Media and political development in Hong Kong

The results of this study point out that we need a media system that is not only free but responsible for its political role and effects so that it would help the political development of Hong Kong. This is especially important as Hong Kong's democratization is developing within a context that the public has not been socialized into democratic politics before. Political parties and interest group politics are not well developed, and there is a modern media system that function as the main communication channel and the public arena in the society. With the educational system and basic social institutions like the family do not perform the role of political socializing agents, the media do not only transmit information but actually help to create the basic views of politics and produce the "diffuse support" of the political system of the public.

In activating informed participation the media are not required to refrain themselves from criticizing the election if they have sufficient ground for criticisms. But they should help the public to differentiate the desirable from the undesirable, the legitimate from the illegitimate etc. If the distinction cannot be easily drawn then the media should at least provide the space for discussions about the issue at hand. In the case of the 1998 election, the existence of criticisms towards the election itself is not a problem, and any undemocratic character or illegitimacy in the election does not free the media from its responsibility to activate informed participation in the broad sense. Actually, the media could have differentiated the different election procedures of the LegCo election clearly and point out the fact that some procedures are undemocratic while others are. The media can also provide a forum for the public to discuss whether the undesirable parts of the election made the whole election illegitimate and thus even the direct election should be condemned. But as argued earlier, these discussions are also largely absent on the media during the period. Actually, this kind of performance evaluation is not only relevant to electoral politics but also other political issues. For instance, it is the same in dealing with the problem of the actual functions of LegCo. It can be argued that the LegCo in reality has very limited functions due to their limited power in the political system. Here, what responsible media should do is to differentiate the real cause behind the "uselessness" of LegCo, that is, the executive-led political system, rather than blasting the LegCo as a place for "useless talks."

In the 1998 election it can be said that the media as a whole did not particularly help or harm the participation in the election. They provide knowledge, but on the other hand provide a distorted picture of the election. But certainly media could have done better. If the media continue their way of covering politics and elections as this study have shown, a final outcome may be that the public receives a view of democratic politics as "useless quarrels." Its negative impacts, including lower levels of trust, declining "diffuse support" for the political system, and increasing cynicism,

are now being felt by some Western democracies (Cappella and Jamieson, 1997). And the potential effects on a developing democracy like Hong Kong would be the failure of the society to develop enough support for democratic politics and basic trust towards the political processes and the people involved.

The performance of the media is also related to the credibility of not only the politicians but also of the media themselves. It has been shown that media strategic coverage is related to cynicism towards the media (Cappella and Jamieson, 1997), and lead to lower levels of media use (Pinkleton *et al.*, 1998). In Hong Kong it is well known that media credibility is on the decline in recent years³⁵. Though this decline may not be directly related to media's political coverage, it cannot be ignored that media's political coverage could potentially have impacts on it. Chapter 2 has shown that the media still remain the most highly rated "political actor." Media should try to retain the public's trust towards them by acting more responsibly. Besides, the lack of credibility of the media is dangerous not only because of the level of trust among the public itself but also because of the fact that lowered credibility may provide the government a rationale for controlling the media.

All these effects are, of course, speculative, but they are not imaginary fantasies. Democracy, meaningful participation, and responsible and free media are what the political development of Hong Kong need. They are interrelated and if one does not exist, the development of the other two would be inevitably hindered. If we believe that the development of a civic culture and a conception of democratic politics that would be supportive to democratization are crucial, then media are important, because from them, the public gets "the pictures in their head."

Possibilities for improvements?

³⁵ A research in 1997 and 1998 showed that the credibility ratings of 19 out of 25 media outlets have significantly declined from 97 to 98. See *Ming Pao*, Jan 4

It is always easier to criticize what media have done than to suggest what media can do. Of course, we can simply say that journalists and media organizations should acknowledge their roles and responsibilities. They have to re-consider their roles and acknowledge their inevitable effects and intervention into the political processes. They may not be the primary actors responsible for promoting democracy but they are certainly responsible for it, at least in the sense that they have to be responsible for the effects of their actions.

However, in reality we also see that self-discipline seems to be insufficient. On the other hand, government regulations are often regarded as opening the door for political censorship. Scholarly works on news making have forcefully demonstrated how, as long as media are organizations which have the basic pressure of producing a product called news everyday, certain habits and ways of news making are virtually inevitable (e.g., Tuchman, 1978). Also, as long as media are commercial organizations which, if not maximizing profits, at least have to survive, they have to produce something that suit the mass' taste and it contributes to basic news values like personification, dramatization and simplification. The more convincing these arguments and analysis are, the more difficult for us to suggest how it is possible to change the existing situation. For some, it is just unrealistic to place hopes on the media. Political scientist Thomas Patterson, in his two major books on media in election (1980; 1994), argues that the media should not play the central role in an election. He argues,

The press is in the news business, not the business of politics, and because of this, its norms and imperatives are not those required for the effective organization of electoral coalitions and debate. Journalistic values and political values are at odds with each other (1994, p.36).

As a result, it is not surprising in seeing this conclusion of his 1980's book *The Mass Media Election*,

A workable system must take into account what the people, the parties, and the press can and cannot do. However appealing the image of the omni-

potent public and however attractive the idea of the press as the corrective for defective political institutions, these beliefs are not the basis for a sound electoral system. (p.181)

Patterson's arguments represent a very pessimistic view towards the media. This pessimistic view may not be totally wrong, but some points about Patterson's view should be noted. As a political scientist Patterson is more interested in salvaging the election. Thus he argues that reform should be undertaken that the campaign is organized for the press instead of by the press (his major suggestion for the US case is to shorten the campaign period, but the campaign period in Hong Kong is already short enough). However, it is a fact that media are central to social and political communication in our society and it is doubtful whether it is possible to design an electoral system in a way that make media less central to the campaign process but at the same time do not affect the public's participation. Actually, in Patterson's point of view the party system would be a better political institution than the media, but the development of the American society is just that the media replaced the party system as central to electoral campaign.

I cannot prove the pessimistic view wrong, but we also cannot prove it right. There are scholars who are more optimistic, or at least not so pessimistic as to dismiss all possibilities of change of media performance. McManus (1994), concluding his study on market-driven journalism, also states that relying on media themselves to recognize their social responsibility is nearly hopeless, but he also pointed out that we should move in the way to change and re-structure the consumers' demand by consumer education and stimulating civic participation. In the US in recent years there is also the movement of public journalism, which argues for a different conception of journalism that are presumed to be helpful in bringing about more meaningful social and political communications (Merritt, 1998; but see Schudson, 1998, for a critique).

Regarding the situation in Hong Kong, the author intends to put forward two suggestions. The suggestions are only possible routes that can be followed in order to search for improvements. They are not well-articulated solutions and they certainly are not free from problems, either theoretical or practical. But it is hoped that they may stimulate further discussions and suggestions.

The first suggestion is about what should be the journalistic values. Journalists in Hong Kong are not very different from their counterparts in the US in terms of the kind of journalistic values they uphold. According to Chan *et al.* (1996), journalists in Hong Kong believe that they should be neutral reporters of social issues and events. However, at the same time they also think that they have a participant-interpretive role to play. Besides, they believe that they should play a watchdog role to check the government, and they have an elitist view as they think it is important to educate the public and raise the cultural level of masses. The apparent contradiction between the neutral-informative role and the participant-interpretive role leads Chan *et al.* to argue that Hong Kong journalists have a "mixed orientation." However, it can be argued that the contradiction pointed out, together with the watchdog and educator role, can be understood as belonging to the same paradigm of journalistic norms described as the "trustee model" by sociologist Michael Schudson (1998). According to Schudson, the most important characteristics of journalistic professional values and norms is the assumption that journalists are people entrusted by the public to decide what issues and events to cover and how to cover them. They are entrusted so that they need to be responsible in the sense that they should not serve as propaganda machines for groups and parties (neutral objective reporter), but they also have to interpret issues for the public and check government's wrong-doings (participant and watchdog), and they think themselves as professional communicators that have to inform the public and even educate them (interpreter and educator). Schudson argues that the trustee model has the problem of producing a group of professional journalists who are accountable to no one.

Here the author does not intend to articulate another model of journalism to replace the trustee model, but the author believes that journalists should re-think about the values they have. For instance, is objectivity necessarily good? Should it be replaced by a notion of mature subjectivity, as Schudson argues in his famous work *Discovering the News*? In what sense the public is in need of education and in what sense the public's view should be respected? More important, the reconsideration of journalistic values should take into account the development and maintenance of a democratic society as a need. Journalists should acknowledge that they are political actors and thus in thinking about their professional norms to uphold they must include political values into consideration.

The second route to improve the situation is related to the development of different program types and genres that allow a more direct and vibrant communication between citizens and their leaders. The analysis in Chapter 9 has touched on the argument that some candidate-controlled communication (TV debates in Chapter 9) can provide a channel for the candidates to communicate with the public in a more direct way. There are other such channels of communication through the mass media, like phone-in talk shows on radio etc. Some scholars in the US have argued that such channels, especially those for the public to express their opinions like phone-in talk show, can provide a way for more widespread and "unstructured" public deliberation (Herbst, 1995; Carey, 1993).

In Hong Kong radio phone-in talk shows have increased in prominence in recent years. However, whether these talk shows can really bring about more widespread and meaningful public communication would depend on the exact way that the program is organized and also the actual practices of the media and the public. Nevertheless, we can at least argue that a possible way to improve communication through the media in an election, and in the political process in general, is to act more as platform providers. In other words, the media can serve better by providing an uncontrolled and unstructured space for advocacy and deliberation.

Let me stress again that these are no panacea for the problem of the kind of media effects and performance discussed in the thesis. But it can be noted that improvements of the situation require the public and the media to recognize and understand media's roles in the political process and the development of democracy in Hong Kong. With fierce discussions media coverage of social issues, it should also be reminded that media coverage of politics in Hong Kong should also be problematized, as media's handling of the political process is at least as important and at the same time problematic as how they handle crime news or other social events.

As a research this study has followed the advice given by some scholars to analysis both effects and content, and to link up normative and empirical concerns. As Chapter 1 discussed, media performance and effects are closely related. What can also be added, but absent from this study, is the question how journalists in Hong Kong do their job. What are the constraints they faced? What are the routines of Hong Kong political journalists? How they negotiate and build up relationships with their sources? These questions are largely remained unanswered. It is not necessary to list possible future research topics, for it can be a very long list. But the author hopes that this study have pointed out the importance of thinking about what our media have done on the political development of our society.

Appendix A: Variable constructions and statistical procedures

This appendix would inform the readers about the construction and transformation of the major variables used throughout the analysis. Information given in the main text will not be repeated. The order of the variables discussed here is according to their order of appearance in the analysis in the main text.

Media attention and exposure

The idea that attention and exposure are two distinct dimensions of media use is supported by a factor analysis. Due to a relatively large number of missing cases in the factor analysis, the factor scores derived in the analysis are not used. Instead, attention is calculated by taking the mean of the three questions related to news media attention. To eliminate missing cases. Several steps are taken. First, as the three variables are highly correlated, it can be argued that attention to news is a stable individual attribute regardless of the particular medium one is exposing to. Thus, when a respondent has a missing value in one attention variable, the mean of the other two is taken as the media attention score for the person. If two medium-attention variables are missing, the remaining one is used. If all three medium-attention variables are missing, then there are two possibilities. The first possibility is that the respondent was not exposed to any news, in this case his/her attention score will be 0, since s/he cannot be said as having paid any attention to news. If at least one of the medium exposure variables is not missing, then his/her attention score will be recoded as the mean of all other respondents attention score.

Exposure to news media is computed by adding the three exposure variables together. All missing values in the medium-exposure variables are recoded as the mean of their respective variables before the addition process.

Level of differentiation (sophistication)

Six questions ask the respondents to place political parties on two dimensions. Respondents have to place the Frontier, Association of Democracy and People's Livelihood (ADPL), and the Hong Kong Progressive Union (HKPU), on whether they favor faster pace of democracy in Hong Kong or not, by means of a Likert scale with 5 representing strongly supportive and 1 strongly opposing. Frontier is strongly supporting faster democracy and openly asking for amending the Basic Law to speed up democratization. The ADPL supports democracy to a certain extent, but unlike other democratic groups in Hong Kong they participated in various organizations

endorsed by the Chinese government like the Provisional Legislature. And though they support amending the Basic Law, they do not adopt a high profile approach on this issue. The HKPU, one of the largest parties in the Provisional Legislature, consists of mostly pro-China businesspersons. They are the least supportive for democracy among the three.

Besides, the respondents have to place the Democratic Party (DP), the ADPL and the Liberal Party (LP) on a dimension of whether they are closer to the grassroots or closer to business interests in economic issues. The LP, consists of many businesspersons, is closest to the business side. In fact, in the 1998 LegCo elections the LP did not win any seats through direct elections in the geographical constituencies. But they did have a couple of legislators won in functional constituencies, showing their support from the business and commercial sectors. The DP and the ADPL are both pro-grassroots. The ADPL, however, was a social organization having a longer history than most of the other current political parties in Hong Kong. Before the development of party politics in Hong Kong it was actually a residents organization focusing its works on livelihood issues on certain low income districts, especially Sham Shui Po in Kowloon. In the 1998 LegCo election they also used the slogan "grassroots cannot lose." On the other hand, the DP did not have this root in grassroot social movements and in the 1998 LegCo election one of their campaign messages is to rebuild the middle class. Thus the ADPL is thought as closer to the grassroots than the DP.

A correct comparison scores 2 and a wrong one scores 0. In deciding whether a comparison is correct, only the relative placement is taken into account. This method has several advantages (Cappella and Jamieson, 1997) over determining a fixed "correct" placement for each party. Missing cases or no difference in relative placement score 1. People may have a lot of missing values if they do not answer just two or three out of the six original questions. And conceptually speaking, whether people have formulated ideas about where the parties stand is an important aspect of the knowledge structure. Adjusting for this, the number of "don't knows" was subtracted by the total comparison score derived above. The final score ranges from 0 to 12 and constitutes the measure of level of differentiation, that is, whether a person can differentiate the relative positions of parties on the two issue dimensions. It represents one's level of political sophistication in this research.

Interaction between sophistication and communication behavior

The interactions between communication variables and level of differentiation are computed by following the argument of Smith and Sasaki (1979) in reducing the

multi-collinearity of the resulting interaction variable and the original variables. The method is not exactly what Smith and Sasaki (1979) proposed, however. For a conceptually close but practically much more simpler method, the calculation used follows Aiken and West (1991) and Pan *et al.* (1994):

Interaction between a and b = $(a - \text{mean of } a) \times (b - \text{mean of } b)$

The multi-collinearity of the interaction variable and the original ones will be reduced to a large extent by this method, though by no means eliminated.

Civic awareness and attitudes towards political participation

Following the factor analysis as shown in the text, variables of civic awareness and attitudes towards political participation are constructed by averaging the relevant statements. To avoid a large number of missing values, the averaging process used the MEAN.1 method again. The resulting variables still have 41 (sense of duty and rights) to 73 (attitudes towards political parties) missing cases. When used in regression analysis or used as control variable in partial correlation analysis, the remaining missing cases are replaced by the mean of the respective variable to avoid a large number of missing cases.

Separation of high and low sophistication groups

In separating high and low sophistication groups, the knowledge levels of the two groups are kept roughly equal. The procedure is to divide people into 10 groups first according to the percentile of their total knowledge levels. Then within each group people are further divided into sophisticated and non-sophisticated by splitting at the median of the group's sophistication score. The resulting 10 sophistication groups and 10 non-sophistication groups are added respectively. The two resulting groups do not differ significantly on their total knowledge levels. By this method, the high sophistication group has 609 respondents while the low sophistication group has 617 respondents.

Performance evaluations

In June survey respondents were asked to give marks from 0 to 10 to rate the performance of the government, DP, DAB, LP, ADPL, the parties and candidates in general, and the election as a whole. The two questions about performance evaluations of the government and the election are used directly as the two respective performance evaluation variables. Performance evaluation of political parties and candidates, on the other hand, involve calculating the mean of the 5

questions asking respondents to rate particular political parties and in general. The MEAN.1 method is used to reduce the number of missing cases. Like in the case of civic awareness and attitudes towards political institutions, the performance variables' missing cases are recoded as mean of the respective variable. The "recoded" variables, which have no missing cases, are used when they are the independent variables and the "unrecoded" ones, which have some missing cases, are used when they are the dependent variables.

Since the scale ranges from 0 to 10, some people may give marks centre around a high value or centre around a low value. Also, some may give greatly varying answers to different questions while some may give more or less the same evaluations for different questions. The amount of variance of each individual in giving the answers for these 7 questions is calculated by using the standard deviation formula. That is, a person's answers to the 7 questions are taken as 7 values to be inserted into the standard deviation formula. As a result, every individual who has given two or more answers in the 7 questions is given a score by the procedure. Those remaining few who did not have a score (due to 6 or 7 don't know's in those questions) are given a score equal to the mean of all the other individuals' score. This is the amount of variation in evaluations.

Weighting of cases

The weighting procedure is designed to tackle the problem that in the survey 82% of respondents reported voting, which is far higher than the government record of 53%. It is argued that the discrepancy can be due to flaws in government record, sample bias, and response bias. It is impossible to know the exact extent of the three problems and it is not possible to fully correct them. But the goal of weighting is to make the weighted sample one that would be as close to the actual population as possible. Two assumptions are involved in the weighting procedure. First, overall speaking, sample bias is the largest problem in the sense that it is likely to account for the bulk of the discrepancy between the government record and the survey result. Second, for the response bias problem, self-reported non-voters did not tell lies, only the self-reported voters may have told lies. These two arguments point to the same direction: to make the sample more "realistic," the general way is to increase the weight of the self-reported non-voters while reduce that of self-reported voters.

Since there is no uncontroversial procedure to identify individual by individual the probability of having biased one's response. All self-reported voters are given the same weight, and another weight for all self-reported non-voters.

Then, to what extent should we increase the weight of the self-reported non-

voters? The only available standard seems to be government's record of a 53% turnout. Thus, the goal of the weighting procedure is to make the turnout rate of the weighted sample to be 53%. The calculations are as follow:

In original sample:

$$\begin{aligned} & \text{non-voters} * \text{value on "turnout"} + \text{voters} * \text{values on "turnout"} \\ &= 107*0 + 452*1 \\ &= 82\% \end{aligned}$$

The desired weighted sample:

$$\begin{aligned} & \text{non-voters} * \text{weight(NV)} * \text{value on "turnout"} + \text{voters} * \text{weight (V)} * \text{value on turnout} \\ &= 53\% \end{aligned}$$

That is:

$$\begin{aligned} 107 * \text{weight (NV)} * 0 + 452 * \text{weight (V)} * 1 &= 53\% \\ 452 * \text{weight (V)} &= 53\% \end{aligned}$$

Therefore, weight (V) = 0.6555

Since in weighting a sample, the sample size of the original sample and the weighted sample should remain constant, so

$$452 * \text{weight (V)} + 107 * \text{weight (NV)} = 559$$

Therefore, weight (NV) = 2.4553

The weighting procedure itself is simply like the procedure a research would use to weight a sample derived by disproportionate stratified sampling. In this case it is a procedure mainly used to correct for the sample bias. Of course, if we see the procedure as one correcting for sample bias, than it can be argued that the sample bias is over-corrected. It is because, as pointed out, the official record may also be wrong and lower than the actual turnout rate. Thus making non-voters amount to 47% of the weighted sample may over-represent them. However, it would be too arbitrary to choose another standard other than 53%.

Although the procedure is mainly a method to treat sample bias, response bias is also partially corrected if we accept the assumption that the self-reported non-voters are not likely to have told lies. In other words, sample bias is corrected, response bias is partially corrected, and government records' flaw is not corrected and the existence of the flaw would cause over-correction problem to the above procedure.

Standardization of independent variables

One trouble in using logistic regression in SPSS is that the output only gives unstandardized logistic regression coefficients. The unstandardized coefficients are heavily dependent on the measurement scale of the variables. For instance, the unstandardized regression coefficient of news exposure in the model in Chapter 8 never exceed 0.01, but it is significantly related to voter turnout. It is because exposure is measured in minutes and an increase in one minute, of course, would not bring about a large increase in the probability of turnout even if exposure is a significant factor. Thus, the unstandardized coefficients are problematic because they are not clear enough and they do not allow comparisons among coefficients.

To facilitate comparisons one can turn the unstandardized logistic regression coefficients into standardized coefficients by using certain formulas (Menard, 1995). A more convenient method is to standardize the independent variables first before adding them into the regression model. The standardization procedure is:

SD var. = (unSD var. – mean of unSD var.)/standard deviation of unSD var.

Appendix B Questionnaires and basic information about the data

The following will give the questionnaires used in the research with the appropriate information, either frequency distribution or descriptive statistics, of the data.

Questionnaire for March survey

以下你提供既資料係絕對保密，而且好多問題都係想知道你的感受，係有對錯之分的，請放心作答。

請問你每日平均大約會花幾多時間睇電視新聞報道呢？

Mean: 42.36 minutes S.D.: 30.84 Valid cases: 1200

係睇電視新聞的時候，你對香港的政治新聞有幾留意呢，你係不留意，頗不留意，普通，頗留意，定係留意呢？

- | | | |
|---|--------|----------------------------------|
| 1 | 你係不留意 | (N=46, valid percentage: 4.0%) |
| 2 | 頗不留意 | (N=129, valid percentage: 11.2%) |
| 3 | 普通 | (N=574, valid percentage: 49.7%) |
| 4 | 頗留意 | (N=302, valid percentage: 26.1%) |
| 5 | 定係留意 | (N=104, valid percentage: 9.0%) |
| 9 | 沒答／不知道 | (N=71) |

請問你每日平均大約會花幾多時間聽電台的新聞報道呢？

Mean: 24.70 minutes S.D.: 36.72 Valid cases: 1168

係收聽電台新聞的時候，你對香港的政治新聞有幾留意呢？你係不留意，頗不留意，普通，頗留意，定係留意呢？

- | | | |
|---|--------|----------------------------------|
| 1 | 你係不留意 | (N=27, valid percentage: 4.2%) |
| 2 | 頗不留意 | (N=98, valid percentage: 15.4%) |
| 3 | 普通 | (N=279, valid percentage: 43.9%) |
| 4 | 頗留意 | (N=168, valid percentage: 26.4%) |
| 5 | 定係留意 | (N=64, valid percentage: 10.1%) |
| 9 | 沒答／不知道 | (N=590) |

請問你每日平均大約會花幾多時間睇報紙的新聞報道呢？

Mean: 34.71 minutes S.D.: 30.79 Valid cases: 1196

通常你每日會睇幾多份報紙呢？

Mean: 1.26 S.D.: 0.585 Valid cases: 1016

請問你最常睇的報紙係邊一份呢？

明報(N=80)	成報(N=43)	信報(N=4)	文匯報(N=1)
東方日報(N=393)	經濟日報(N=24)	大公報(N=0)	SCMP(N=11)
蘋果日報(N=360)	HONG KONG STANDARD(N=0)		新報(N=13)
天天日報(N=35)	商報(N=2)	其他(N=29)	沒答(N=221)

係睇報紙的時候，你對香港的政治新聞有幾留意呢？你係不留意，頗不留意，普通，頗留意，定係留意呢？

- | | |
|----------|----------------------------------|
| 1 你係不留意 | (N=62, valid percentage: 6.1%) |
| 2 頗不留意 | (N=168, valid percentage: 16.6%) |
| 3 普通 | (N=488, valid percentage: 48.2%) |
| 4 頗留意 | (N=209, valid percentage: 20.7%) |
| 5 定係留意 | (N=85, valid percentage: 8.4%) |
| 9 沒答／不知道 | (N=214) |

係睇報紙的時候，你對一D評論文章，包括社論，專欄同埋論壇文章，又有幾留意呢？你係不留意，頗不留意，普通，頗留意，定係留意呢？

- | | |
|----------|----------------------------------|
| 1 你係不留意 | (N=150, valid percentage: 14.9%) |
| 2 頗不留意 | (N=260, valid percentage: 25.7%) |
| 3 普通 | (N=338, valid percentage: 33.5%) |
| 4 頗留意 | (N=214, valid percentage: 21.2%) |
| 5 定係留意 | (N=48, valid percentage: 4.8%) |
| 9 沒答／不知道 | (N=216) |

而家各電台都有一D接聽聽眾電話的時事討論節目，例如九十年代，風波裏的茶杯等，請問你有無收聽呢？你係經常收聽，有時會收聽，好少聽，定係完全不聽呢？

- | | |
|----------|----------------------------------|
| 1 經常 | (N=201, valid percentage: 16.6%) |
| 2 有時 | (N=351, valid percentage: 29.0%) |
| 3 好少 | (N=262, valid percentage: 21.7%) |
| 4 不聽 | (N=393, valid percentage: 32.5%) |
| 9 沒答／不知道 | (N=19) |

電視台除左新聞報道之外，會有一D新聞部製作的時事節目，例如城市論壇，新聞透視等，請問你有無收睇呢D節目呢？你係經常收睇，有時會收睇，好少睇，定係完全不睇呢？

- | | |
|----------|----------------------------------|
| 1 經常 | (N=261, valid percentage: 21.4%) |
| 2 有時 | (N=650, valid percentage: 53.3%) |
| 3 好少 | (N=222, valid percentage: 18.2%) |
| 4 不聽 | (N=87, valid percentage: 7.1%) |
| 9 沒答／不知道 | (N=6) |

你平時會唔會同家人或者朋友談論政治同埋公共事務呢？係經常，有時，好少，定係從來不會呢？

- | | |
|----------|----------------------------------|
| 1 經常 | (N=66, valid percentage: 5.5%) |
| 2 有時 | (N=429, valid percentage: 35.0%) |
| 3 好少 | (N=436, valid percentage: 35.6%) |
| 4 不聽 | (N=293, valid percentage: 23.9%) |
| 9 沒答／不知道 | (N=2) |

特區政府現正為立法會選舉宣傳，包括有海報，單張，廣告咁，你最近有無留意到呢D宣傳呢？你係經常留意到，間中見到，好少留意到，定係未見過呢？

- | | |
|----------|----------------------------------|
| 1 經常 | (N=348, valid percentage: 28.6%) |
| 2 有時 | (N=366, valid percentage: 30.1%) |
| 3 好少 | (N=426, valid percentage: 35.0%) |
| 4 不聽 | (N=77, valid percentage: 6.3%) |
| 9 沒答／不知道 | (N=10) |

請問你係今次選舉入面係唔係已經登記左成為選民呢？

- | | |
|-------|----------------------------------|
| 1 係 | (N=365, valid percentage: 30.0%) |
| 2 否 | (N=851, valid percentage: 70.0%) |
| 9 沒作答 | (N=10) |

係五月你會不會去投票呢？係一定會，好可能會，一半一半，大概不會，定係一定不會呢？

- | | |
|--------|----------------------------------|
| 1 一定會 | (N=370, valid percentage: 43.9%) |
| 2 好可能 | (N=164, valid percentage: 19.5%) |
| 3 可能 | (N=236, valid percentage: 28.0%) |
| 4 大概不 | (N=42, valid percentage: 5.0%) |
| 5 一定不會 | (N=30, valid percentage: 3.6%) |
| 9 沒作答 | (N=384) |

係九五年立法局選舉的時候，你係唔係合資格選民呢？

- | | |
|-------|----------------------------------|
| 1 係 | (N=969, valid percentage: 80.7%) |
| 2 否 | (N=232, valid percentage: 19.3%) |
| 9 沒作答 | (N=25) |

你當年有無投票呢？

- | | |
|------|----------------------------------|
| 1 有 | (N=533, valid percentage: 56.2%) |
| 2 無 | (N=416, valid percentage: 43.8%) |
| 9 沒答 | (N=277) |

以下我會讀出一D句子，想知道你會唔會同意呢D句子所講的東西，請你係我讀完一句句子之後，講出你係非常不同意，不同意，普通，同意，非常同意，抑或係無意見

- 1 非常同意
- 2 不同意
- 3 普通
- 4 同意
- 5 非常同意
- 9 沒意見

公民有權利透過不同方式表達自己的意見。	(mean=3.95, S.D.=0.59, N=1126)
參與公共事務係公民應負的責任。	(mean=3.89, S.D.=0.60, N=1127)
香港政府並唔能夠對民意作出回應。	(mean=3.20, S.D.=0.90, N=1067)
如果我無得投票，我會覺得我的權利被剝削。	(mean=3.52, S.D.=0.99, N=1110)
普通市民唔能夠掌握香港政治。	(mean=3.53, S.D.=0.89, N=1106)
一位公民有責任遵守法律。	(mean=4.15, S.D.=0.64, N=1170)
投票係一種向政府表達意見的有效方法。	(mean=3.55, S.D.=0.87, N=1115)
你對一般的公共事務非常熟悉。	(mean=2.75, S.D.=0.81, N=1151)
香港市民無能力影響政府的政策。	(mean=3.16, S.D.=1.02, N=1106)
除非會影響我的利益，否則我無需要去投票。	(mean=2.55, S.D.=0.94, N=1113)
香港的選舉太複雜，令我感到難以理解。	(mean=3.19, S.D.=1.00, N=1109)
一位公民應有權參與政治。	(mean=3.85, S.D.=0.69, N=1117)
你對五月的選舉感興趣。	(mean=3.05, S.D.=0.96, N=1128)
你對香港政治感興趣。	(mean=2.83, S.D.=0.91, N=1126)

以下有一D有關時事的問題，請你盡量作答，如果你唔知的話，你可以嘗試去估下答案係甚麼，亦可以直接話唔知道，你係唔洗介意的。你知唔知道劉慧卿屬於邊一個政治團體呢？

- 1 前線 (N=340, percentage: 27.7%)
- 2 其他
- 9 無作答

程介南係邊一個政黨的成員？

- 1 民建聯 (N=424, percentage: 34.6%)
- 2 其他
- 9 不答

周梁淑儀係邊一個政黨的成員？

- 1 自由黨 (N=544, percentage: 44.4%)
- 2 其他
- 9 不答

民主民生協進會的主席係邊個？

- 1 馮檢基 (N=277, percentage: 22.6%)
- 2 其他
- 9 不答

臨立會主席係邊個呢？

- 1 范徐麗泰（范太也可以） (N=668, percentage: 54.5%)
- 2 其他
- 9 不答

為穩定樓市，港府提出每年興建幾多房屋單位的目標？

- 1 85000 (N=825, percentage: 67.3%)
- 2 其他
- 9 不答

特區政府係二月中取消左邊個部門，以資訊科技管理局取代呢？係文康廣播局，貿易發展局，定係生產力促進局呢？

- 1 文康廣播局 (N=575, percentage: 46.9%)
- 2 其他
- 3 不答

派狗仔隊跟蹤法官高奕暉的係邊個報業集團呢？

- 1 東方日報（東方報業集團） (N=513, percentage: 41.8%)
- 2 其他
- 9 不答

臨立會二月尾還原人權法，邊個政黨曾經係二讀時投反對票呢：民協，民建聯，自民聯？

- 1 民協 (N=327, percentage: 26.7%)
- 2 其他
- 9 不答

以下邊一個政黨全力支持政府的強制性私營公積金計劃：港進聯，民建聯，民主黨？

- 1 港進聯 (N=120, percentage: 9.8%)
- 2 其他
- 9 不答

臨立會通過六十七億賠償俾香港電訊，有無政黨投反對票呢：係有兩個黨反對，一個黨反對，定係無政黨反對呢？

- 1 無反對 (N=125, percentage: 10.2%)
- 2 其他
- 9 不答

前線支唔支持修改基本法以加快民主進程呢？

- 1 支持 (N=474, percentage: 38.7%)
- 2 不支持
- 9 不作答

以下邊個係九五至九七年度的立法局議員：曾鈺成，鄭家富，蔡素玉？

- 1 鄭家富 (N=358, percentage: 29.2%)
- 2 其他
- 3 不答

以下邊個政黨係九六年加入左推選特首的推選委員會：民協，民主黨，民權黨？

- 1 民協 (N=479, percentage: 39.1%)
- 2 其他
- 9 不答

民主黨係由邊兩個組織合併而成呢？

- 1 港同盟，匯點 (N=67, percentage: 5.5%)
- 2 答中一個， (N=103, percentage: 8.4%)
- 3 全錯
- 9 無答

九五至九七年度立法局的三大黨係邊三個？

- 1 全對（民主黨，民建聯，自由黨） (N=255, percentage: 20.8%)
- 2 對兩個 (N=324, percentage: 26.4%)
- 3 對一個 (N=144, percentage: 11.7%)
- 4 全不對
- 9 無答

邊位前立法局議員因選舉名單排名問題而拒絕以前線名義參選呢：係梁耀忠，李卓人，定係劉千石呢？

- 1 梁耀忠 (N=350, percentage: 28.5%)
- 2 其他
- 9 沒答

為增加民建聯爭議席機會，邊位民建聯議員從九龍東轉到新界區參選呢：係陳婉嫻，程介南，定係譚耀忠呢？

- 1 譚耀宗 (N=442, percentage: 36.1%)
- 2 其他
- 9 沒答

民權黨將派出幾多名成員參選？係一位，兩位，定係三位呢？

- 1 三位 (N=188, percentage: 15.3%)
- 2 其他
- 9 不答

民協主席馮檢基將會係邊一個選區參選，同曾鈺成，涂謹申等人相遇呢？

- 1 九龍西 (N=204, percentage: 16.6%)
- 2 其他
- 9 不答

五月直選一共會有幾多個選區呢？

- 1 5 個 (N=269, percentage: 21.9%)
- 2 其他
- 9 沒答

係五月投票的時候，選民會將票投比甚麼單位呢？係一個候選人，一張候選人名單，一個政黨，定係一個組別呢？

- 1 一張候選人名單 (N=198, percentage: 16.2%)
- 2 其他
- 9 沒答

有幾多名議員將會係五月的地區直選裏面產生呢？

- 1 20 名 (N=459, percentage: 37.4%)
- 2 其他
- 9 沒答

請問你係屬於邊個選區呢？

- 1 NT West 新界西 (N=207, valid percentage: 16.9%)
- 2 NT East 新界東 (N=114, valid percentage: 9.3%)
- 3 Kowloon East 九龍東 (N=203, valid percentage: 16.6%)
- 4 Kowloon West 九龍西 (N=108, valid percentage: 8.8%)
- 5 Hong Kong Island 港島區 (N=179, valid percentage: 14.6%)
- 9 不作答／不知道 (N=415)

請問你所屬選區係五月直選中有幾多議席呢？³⁶

- 1 五席（新界西或東區）
- 2 其他
- 9 沒作答

請問你所屬選區係五月直選中有幾多議席呢？

- 1 三席（九龍東或西區）
- 2 其他
- 9 沒作答

³⁶ Due to a mistake in setting up the questionnaire in the computer system, there was a failure in this filtering question (POLITA, POLITB, and POLITC). Thus the question was not used in the analysis and the data regarding them are not reported.

請問你所屬選區係五月直選中有幾多議席呢？

- 1 四席（港島區）
- 2 其他
- 9 沒作答

你知唔知今年選舉會係邊一日舉行呢？

- 1 五月二十四日 (N=230, percentage: 18.8%)
- 2 錯
- 9 沒作答

以下請講出你對一D政治團體的觀感，你覺得係加速香港民主發展的問題上，民協係

非常不支持，不支持，普通，支持，定係非常支持呢？

- 1 非常不支持
- 2 不支持
- 3 普通
- 4 支持
- 5 非常支持

Mean: 3.36 S.D.: 0.72 Valid cases: 929

咁前線呢？

Mean: 3.75 S.D.: 0.83 Valid cases: 867

港進聯又點呢？

Mean: 3.01 S.D.: 0.76 Valid cases: 676

咁你自己的立場又係點呢？

Mean: 3.75 S.D.: 0.69 Valid cases: 1061

你覺得係民生及經濟問題上，民協的立場係非常接近基層，接近基層，普通，接近工商界，定係非常接近工商界呢？

- 1 非常接近基層
- 2 接近基層
- 3 普通
- 4 接近工商界
- 5 非常接近工商界
- 9 沒作答

Mean: 2.66 S.D.: 0.83 Valid cases: 925

咁自由黨呢？

Mean: 3.56 S.D.: 0.90 Valid cases: 939

咁民主黨呢？

Mean: 2.27 S.D.: 0.81 Valid cases: 950

咁你自己的立場又係點呢？

Mean: 2.39

S.D.: 0.79

Valid cases: 1043

係香港有無一個政黨或政治團體你係特別支持的呢？

- | | |
|------|----------------------------------|
| 1 有 | (N=402, valid percentage: 33.9%) |
| 2 無 | (N=784, valid percentage: 66.1%) |
| 9 沒答 | (N=40) |

咁係邊一個團體呢？

- | | |
|------------|--------------|
| 民主黨(N=274) | 自由黨(N=33) |
| 民建聯(N=46) | 前線(N=25) |
| 民權黨(N=3) | 工盟(N=0) |
| 工聯會(N=4) | 自民聯(N=0) |
| 港進聯(N=2) | 一二三民主聯盟(N=0) |
| 民協(N=13) | 其他(N=0) |
| 沒答(N=826) | |

你對該團體的支持度有幾高呢？係非常高，高，定係一般呢？

- | | |
|-------|----------------------------------|
| 1 非常高 | (N=151, valid percentage: 37.6%) |
| 2 高 | (N=163, valid percentage: 40.5%) |
| 3 一般 | (N=88, valid percentage: 37.6%) |
| 9 沒答 | (N=824) |

以下會有一D句子，係讀完每一句之後，請你講出你係非常不同意，不同意，普通，同意，非常同意，定係無意見（若被訪者遲疑不答，重覆答案選擇）？

- | |
|--------|
| 1 非常同意 |
| 2 不同意 |
| 3 普通 |
| 4 同意 |
| 5 非常同意 |
| 9 沒意見 |

整體來講，五月的競選將會係公平的。 (mean=3.35, S.D.=0.89, N=1031)

如果五月立法會選舉成功，將會增加港人信心。 (mean=3.18, S.D.=0.86, N=1044)

今次選舉對香港整體發展好重要。 (mean=3.54, S.D.=0.78, N=1085)

特區政府未能有效咁解決香港的社會問題。 (mean=3.49, S.D.=0.85, N=1100)

政府的高層都係為公眾利益而工作。 (mean=3.20, S.D.=0.91, N=1100)

選舉同埋市民的生活有密切的關係。 (mean=3.43, S.D.=0.87, N=1121)

五月選舉出來的立法會合法性無容置疑。 (mean=3.42, S.D.=0.86, N=999)

香港的政黨有鮮明的政治立場。 (mean=3.12, S.D.=0.89, N=1046)

五月的立法會選舉對香港民主進程有正面的幫助。 (mean=3.41, S.D.=0.84, N=1048)

香港的政黨會為左爭取選票而改變立場。 (mean=3.44, S.D.=0.87, N=1015)

選舉只係政客爭取名利的方法，對小市民意義不大。 (mean=3.14, S.D.=0.98, N=1080)

特區政府係一個真正由港人治港的政府。 (mean=3.11, S.D.=0.96, N=1090)

香港的政黨只有係選舉的時候先至會著重民意。

(mean=3.37, S.D.=0.92, N=1079)

特區政府並唔算係一個民主的政府。

(mean=3.09, S.D.=0.92, N=1067)

今次選舉對香港的政治發展好重要。

(mean=3.51, S.D.=0.80, N=1063)

中國政府並無干預特區政府的運作。

(mean=3.11, S.D.=0.99, N=1041)

特區政府而家給予市民的民主自由程度令你感到滿意。

(mean=3.25, S.D.=0.83, N=1109)

特區政府係處理民生問題上係有效率的。

(mean=2.88, S.D.=0.87, N=1091)

一般來講，香港市民應該信任特區政府。

(mean=3.53, S.D.=0.79, N=1118)

香港的政黨係政策問題上無明顯的差異。

(mean=2.85, S.D.=0.95, N=1007)

最後會有一D有關個人資料的問題，呢D資料我地會絕對保密，而我地純粹係用作統計用途，請你放心回答。請問你的家庭總收入每月係幾多呢？係一萬以下，一至二萬，二至三萬，三至四萬，四至五萬，五至六萬，六至七萬，七至八萬，定係超過八萬呢？

- | | | |
|----|-------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 | 10000 以下 | (N=185, valid percentage: 16.5%) |
| 2 | 10000-20000 | (N=346, valid percentage: 30.8%) |
| 3 | 20000-30000 | (N=263, valid percentage: 23.4%) |
| 4 | 30000-40000 | (N=168, valid percentage: 14.9%) |
| 5 | 40000-50000 | (N=68, valid percentage: 6.0%) |
| 6 | 50000-60000 | (N=32, valid percentage: 2.8%) |
| 7 | 60000-70000 | (N=16, valid percentage: 1.4%) |
| 8 | 70000-80000 | (N=9, valid percentage: 0.8%) |
| 9 | 80000 以上 | (N=37, valid percentage: 3.3%) |
| 99 | 不作答 | (N=102) |

(若剛好 10000, 算作 10000 以下，如此類推)

咁請問你的個人收入又點呢？係無正式收入，一萬以下，一至二萬，二至三萬，三至四萬，四至五萬，五至六萬，六至七萬，七至八萬，定係超過八萬呢？

- | | | |
|----|-------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 | 無正式收入 | (N=426, valid percentage: 35.9%) |
| 2 | 10000 以下 | (N=235, valid percentage: 19.8%) |
| 3 | 10000-20000 | (N=337, valid percentage: 28.4%) |
| 4 | 20000-30000 | (N=105, valid percentage: 8.9%) |
| 5 | 30000-40000 | (N=43, valid percentage: 3.6%) |
| 6 | 40000-50000 | (N=16, valid percentage: 1.3%) |
| 7 | 50000-60000 | (N=8, valid percentage: 0.7%) |
| 8 | 60000-70000 | (N=3, valid percentage: 0.3%) |
| 9 | 70000-80000 | (N=13, valid percentage: 1.1%) |
| 99 | 不作答 | (N=40) |

(若剛好 10000, 算作 10000 以下，如此類推)

請問你係邊一年出世的呢？

Mean: 58.18

S.D.: 14.22

Valid cases: 1158

請問你的教育程度係點呢？係無正式讀書，小學畢業或以下，中一至中三，中四至中五，中六至中七，大專，定係研究院或以上呢？

1	無正式讀書	(N=81, valid percentage: 6.7%)
2	小學畢業或以下	(N=198, valid percentage: 16.4%)
3	中一至中三	(N=218, valid percentage: 18.0%)
4	中四至中五	(N=344, valid percentage: 28.5%)
5	中六至中七	(N=130, valid percentage: 10.8%)
6	大專	(N=221, valid percentage: 18.3%)
7	研究院或以上	(N=17, valid percentage: 1.4%)
9	不作答	(N=17)

請問你係持邊一種護照的呢？

1	中國護照	(N=49, valid percentage: 4.3%)
2	特區護照	(N=153, valid percentage: 13.5%)
3	C I	(N=152, valid percentage: 13.4%)
4	B N O	(N=720, valid percentage: 63.3%)
5	外國護照	(N=38, valid percentage: 3.3%)
6	其他	(N=25, valid percentage: 2.2%)
9	沒作答	(N=89)

請問你現時的婚姻狀況係點呢？係未婚，已婚，抑或係其他呢？

1	未婚	(N=421, valid percentage: 34.7%)
2	已婚	(N=766, valid percentage: 63.1%)
3	其他	(N=26, valid percentage: 2.1%)
9	不作答	(N=13)

你係香港居住了幾多年呢？

Mean: 32.75, S.D.: 12.02, Valid cases: 1210

性別（無須發問）

1	男	(N=638, valid percentage: 52.3%)
2	女	(N=582, valid percentage: 47.7%)
3	沒記錄	(N=6)

Questionnaire for June survey

你好，我係中文大學新聞系的學生，正做緊一項有關立法會選舉的研究，我地在三月的時候其實曾經打過黎，同你屋企一位（名字，或「係____年出生的男／女士」）做過訪問。而家我地想同佢核對一下資料，同埋再做一個非常簡短的訪問，唔知佢而家係唔係度呢？

3a 被訪者不在 — 咁請問佢大概幾時會係度呢？（寫下時間）

3b 沒有這個人 — 咁請問你電話係唔係 _____ 呢？

咁唔知會唔會係另外一位同我地做過訪問呢？可唔可以麻煩你問一問呢？

咁請問你係唔係在三月之前就一直住係度呢？

3c 被訪者在 — 繼續訪問

你好，我係中文大學新聞系的學生，我地在三月的時候曾經打過黎，同你做過訪問。而家我想 check 一下我地的訪問員係唔係同你做過訪問，核對一下資料，請問你記唔記得曾經做過訪問呢？

有／唔係記得好清楚／唔記得：

根據我地有的統計資料，你係____年出生，已婚／未婚，教育程度係____，個人收則介乎____同____之間，請問有無出錯呢？

無：

咁唔知會唔會係另外一位同我地做過訪問呢？可唔可以麻煩你問一問呢？

有 — 資料無錯 — 繼續訪問 （4） _____

有 — 資料有錯 — 更改資料 — 繼續訪問 （4） _____

唔記得 — 資料無錯 — 繼續訪問 （4） _____

唔記得 — 資料有錯 （3 b） _____

無 — 無其他可能被訪者 — 停止訪問 _____

4 由於我們想研究能夠得出更有意義 結果，我地希望係選舉後再同被訪者做一個好簡短訪問，唔洗五分鐘就可以問完，唔知你可唔可以回答我地的問題呢？

請問你係五月二十四日有無去投票呢？

1 有 (N=452, valid percentage: 80.9%)

2 無 (N=107, valid percentage: 19.1%)

3 不作答 (N=0)

請問係競選期間，有無候選人或助選團曾經上門或者打電話向你拉票呢？

1 有 (N=147, valid percentage: 26.4%)

2 無 (N=409, valid percentage: 73.6%)

3 不作答 (N=3)

請問有無朋友或者親人曾經勸喻過你去投票呢？

- | | |
|-------|----------------------------------|
| 1 有 | (N=132, valid percentage: 23.7%) |
| 2 無 | (N=426, valid percentage: 76.3%) |
| 3 不作答 | (N=1) |

請問你有無睇過電視播出的候選人論壇節目呢？你係經常睇，間中睇，好少睇，定係完全唔睇呢？

- | | |
|-------|----------------------------------|
| 1 經常 | (N=61, valid percentage: 10.9%) |
| 2 間中 | (N=326, valid percentage: 58.3%) |
| 3 好少 | (N=97, valid percentage: 17.4%) |
| 4 唔睇 | (N=75, valid percentage: 13.4%) |
| 9 不作答 | (N=0) |

咁係你睇的時候，你係非常唔留意，唔留意，普通，留意，定係完全非常留意呢？

- | | |
|---------|----------------------------------|
| 1 非常唔留意 | (N=8, valid percentage: 1.7%) |
| 2 唔留意 | (N=50, valid percentage: 10.4%) |
| 3 普通 | (N=273, valid percentage: 56.5%) |
| 4 留意 | (N=122, valid percentage: 25.3%) |
| 5 非常留意 | (N=30, valid percentage: 6.2%) |
| 9 不作答 | (N=76) |

你認為過去兩個月入面，媒介係提供有關候選人政策意見的資訊方面做得足唔足夠呢？係非常唔足夠，唔足夠，咁咁好，定係太多呢？

- | | |
|---------|----------------------------------|
| 1 非常唔足夠 | (N=6, valid percentage: 1.2%) |
| 2 唔足夠 | (N=88, valid percentage: 17.7%) |
| 3 咁咁好 | (N=364, valid percentage: 73.1%) |
| 4 太多 | (N=40, valid percentage: 8.0%) |
| 9 不作答 | (N=61) |

你認為媒介係提供有關候選人競選策略的資訊方面做得足唔足夠呢？係非常唔足夠，唔足夠，咁咁好，定係太多呢？

- | | |
|---------|----------------------------------|
| 1 非常唔足夠 | (N=3, valid percentage: 0.6%) |
| 2 唔足夠 | (N=151, valid percentage: 30.1%) |
| 3 咁咁好 | (N=335, valid percentage: 66.9%) |
| 4 太多 | (N=12, valid percentage: 2.4%) |
| 9 不作答 | (N=58) |

你認為媒介係提供有關候選人背景資料的資訊方面做得足唔足夠呢？係非常唔足夠，唔足夠，咁咁好，定係太多呢？

- | | | |
|---|-------|----------------------------------|
| 1 | 非常不足夠 | (N=3, valid percentage: 0.6%) |
| 2 | 唔足夠 | (N=143, valid percentage: 30.3%) |
| 3 | 咁咁好 | (N=313, valid percentage: 66.3%) |
| 4 | 太多 | (N=13, valid percentage: 2.8%) |
| 9 | 不作答 | (N=87) |

你認為媒介係提供有關預測候選人勝負的民意調查方面做得足唔足夠呢？係非常唔夠，唔足夠，咁咁好，定係太多呢？

- | | | |
|---|-------|----------------------------------|
| 1 | 非常不足夠 | (N=4, valid percentage: 0.9%) |
| 2 | 唔足夠 | (N=90, valid percentage: 21.0%) |
| 3 | 咁咁好 | (N=312, valid percentage: 72.7%) |
| 4 | 太多 | (N=23, valid percentage: 5.4%) |
| 9 | 不作答 | (N=130) |

咁你認為媒介係提供有關選舉制度資訊方面又足唔足夠呢？係非常唔足夠，唔足夠，咁咁好，定係太多呢？

- | | | |
|---|-------|----------------------------------|
| 1 | 非常不足夠 | (N=16, valid percentage: 3.2%) |
| 2 | 唔足夠 | (N=158, valid percentage: 31.8%) |
| 3 | 咁咁好 | (N=307, valid percentage: 61.8%) |
| 4 | 太多 | (N=16, valid percentage: 3.2%) |
| 9 | 不作答 | (N=62) |

咁你認為媒介提供資訊對選民投票 幫助有幾大呢？係非常有用，有用，一般，無用，定係非常無用呢？

- | | | |
|---|------|----------------------------------|
| 1 | 非常有用 | (N=6, valid percentage: 6.0%) |
| 2 | 有用 | (N=88, valid percentage: 44.1%) |
| 3 | 普通 | (N=364, valid percentage: 33.8%) |
| 4 | 無用 | (N=77, valid percentage: 14.1%) |
| 5 | 非常無用 | (N=11, valid percentage: 2.0%) |
| 9 | 不作答 | (N=12) |

在選舉期間，你有無特別花多 d 時間睇電視，報紙或者聽電台新聞報道呢？係花多左好多時間，多左少少，同平時一樣，定係少左呢？

- | | | |
|---|--------|----------------------------------|
| 1 | 花多好多時間 | (N=17, valid percentage: 3.0%) |
| 2 | 花多少少 | (N=209, valid percentage: 37.5%) |
| 3 | 同平時一樣 | (N=329, valid percentage: 59.0%) |
| 4 | 少左 | (N=3, valid percentage: 0.5%) |
| 9 | 不作答 | (N=1) |

在選舉期間，你有無比平時特別留意多左有關選舉同埋香港政治新聞報道呢？
係留意多好多，多左少少，同平時一樣，定係留意少左呢？

- | | | |
|---|-------|----------------------------------|
| 1 | 留意多好多 | (N=22, valid percentage: 3.9%) |
| 2 | 留意多少少 | (N=303, valid percentage: 54.2%) |
| 3 | 同平時一樣 | (N=228, valid percentage: 40.8%) |
| 4 | 少左 | (N=5, valid percentage: 0.9%) |
| 9 | 不作答 | (N=1) |

如果要你以零分至十分評分的話，你覺得今次選舉中政府表現值幾多分呢？

Mean: 5.94, S.D.: 1.54, Valid cases: 538

咁民主黨 表現又值幾多分呢？

Mean: 6.41, S.D.: 1.83, Valid cases: 501

民建聯呢？

Mean: 5.56, S.D.: 1.81, Valid cases: 471

民協呢？

Mean: 4.68, S.D.: 1.85, Valid cases: 469

自由黨呢？

Mean: 4.71, S.D.: 1.73, Valid cases: 455

咁所有政黨同埋候選人的整體表現又值幾多分呢？

Mean: 6.21, S.D.: 1.44, Valid cases: 505

咁整個選舉的過程你又覺得值幾多分呢？

Mean: 6.63, S.D.: 1.55, Valid cases: 522

The proportional representation system, and the list voting system

The 1998 Legislative Council Election had three parts – election committee, functional constituencies, and geographical constituencies. They were responsible for returning 10, 30, and 20 legislators, respectively, into the Council. This study has focused on the geographical constituency election, which was the only one having a direct, one-person-one-vote election. It is chosen as the focus since it was the only truly democratic system, and it is expected to expand as democratization continues. According to the Basic Law, Hong Kong's constitutional document, in 2007 there will be 30 legislators among the 60 to be elected directly by the public. And after 2007 the whole electoral systems as well as Hong Kong's democratization process could be reviewed.

The 1998 election has adopted the proportional representation system, which was different from 1991 election, which used double-seat-double-vote system, and also different from the 1995 election, which used single-seat-single-vote system. In 1998, the whole territory was divided into 5 geographical constituencies – Hong Kong Island, Kowloon West, Kowloon East, New Territories East, and New Territories West. The 20 seats were divided into the 5 constituencies according to the population sizes within them. Kowloon East and West only had three seats each, while NT East and West had five each.

Within the system, candidates do not enter the competition as single-individual candidates. Rather, candidates belong to the same political organization or party are put on one list. Independent candidates have a one-candidate list for him/herself. Thus the number of candidates on each list varies. Voters do not have the chance to choose one particular candidate but only a list. Therefore, the Hong Kong SAR government, starting from March, used the name "list voting system" in their promotion of the election.

The political organizations and parties are responsible for deciding the ranking among the candidates on the list. The vote calculating method is designed so that the candidate ranked first has the highest chance to get a seat while the second has a greatly diminished chance. If a candidate is ranked third, the chance is slim (actually, no candidate ranked third on a list won). Commentators have pointed out that this particular aspect of the system had directly led to the intra-party conflicts that were mentioned in Chapter 9.

Vote calculating method

The vote calculating method uses the largest remainder formula with the "Hare quota." We can use the New Territories East election as an example. The constituency had 7 candidate lists – Liberal Party (LP), Independent Andrew Wong (AW), Citizens Party (CP), Frontier (FR), Democratic Alliance for the Betterment of Hong Kong (DAB), Democratic Party (DP), and Independent Ken Ping-chi (KPC).

The results of the election are summarized in the following table.

List	Candidates ranking	% of votes won by first candidate	% of votes won by second candidate	Candidate won in the election
LP	Allen Li Peng-fei Wong Yiu-chee Cheng Chee-kwok	10.25%	-----	-----
Wong (Ind.)	Andrew Wong	13.43% (4)	-----	Andrew Wong
CP	Liu Yat-ming	0.72%	-----	-----
FR	Emily Lau Ho Sau-lan	30.81% (1)	10.81% (5)	Emily Lau Ho Sau-lan
DAB	Lau Kong-wah Cheung Hon-chung Chan Ping Wan Yuet-kau Wong Mo-tai	17.17% (3)	-----	Lau Kong-wah
DP	Cheng Kar-foo Wong Sing-chi Lam Wing-yin Ho Suk-ping	25.61% (2)	5.61%	Cheng Kar-foo
Ken (Ind.)	Kan Ping-chee	2.01%	-----	-----

(Total votes: 330434)

Since the constituency had 5 seats, a seat was won if a list got 20% of vote. Therefore, DP and FR got at least one seat since their lists had more than 20% of votes. As three seats were left, they would be obtained by the list with the "largest remainder." There are several methods in calculating the remainder but the Hare quota was used this time. The percentage of votes that the second candidate on a list got was calculated by the percentage the list got minus 20% (which can be thought as being "consumed" by the first candidate of the list). Thus in the above table we can calculate the percentage of vote the second candidates of DP and FR got, since the two lists had more than 20% of votes. If there was a list obtained more than 40% of votes, a percentage will also be given to the third candidate on that list

by the total percentage the list got minus 40%.

After that we can determine who get the seats by just picking out the candidates with the highest percentages, so in the NT East Frontier's Emily Lau and Ho Sau-lan, DP's Cheng Ka-foo, DAB's Lau Kong-wah, and Independent Andrew Wong entered the LegCo.

Controversies about the electoral system

There were heated debates and controversies surrounding the electoral system and the vote calculating method during the election period. Political scientists have pointed out that different electoral systems may give rise not only to the specific results of particular elections but also may affect various aspects of political development, like the development of party system, in a country. For these more theoretical discussions on electoral system, readers may refer to Choi (1998)'s *Perspective on Hong Kong Electoral Systems*, which gave a detailed discussions on these issues with regard to the Hong Kong situation.

Here, it may be suitable to give a brief review on the more specific controversies raised by political parties and the public during the election period. When the government announced the plan to adopt the proportional representation system, the democrats' reaction was to condemn the change of electoral rules as a means to curtail the democrats' power in the legislature. Since under proportional representation system it is much more difficult for any party and faction to have a landslide victory and control the legislature (the DP did so in 1991, and then in 1995 to a less extent). However, this accusation was refuted by the leftist parties and the government as they argued that Hong Kong never had an electoral system used for successive LegCo elections. Also, the proportional representation system is used by various Western democratic countries that have a multi-party system, like the one that is seemingly emerging in Hong Kong. The proportional representation system can lead to a better correspondence between the percentage of votes and the number of seats a party gets.

Enter into the election period the center of debate became whether the new system is too difficult to understand for the citizens and thus affecting their intention to participate. In the campaign period, various polling organizations including academic and media institutions conducted polls to test the public's understanding about the system. The results consistently showed that about 80% to 90% of respondents "did not understand the new system."

The government's major response to the evidences of the polls was that voters do not need to know every aspect of the new system. They even do not need to know

how the votes will be calculated. All they need to know is that they have to choose a list that they like best. The government's response was then criticized by some commentators and politicians as "insulting the Hong Kong public's intelligence." While commentators criticized the government as having failed to promote the new system, Head of the Electoral Committee Justice Wu Kwok-hing commented that the greatest obstacle actually came from the academia and the media, who continually propagate the message that the system is difficult³⁷.

It is certain that proportional representation is more complicated than single-seat-single-vote. However, it seems that the media might indeed have over-emphasized the complexity and the failure of the public to understand the new system. For instance, *Ming Pao* gave headline coverage on the main news page on April 19 about a poll result that 90% of respondents did not understand the system. What the poll did show, however, was that 87% of respondents failed to name the new voting system in an open-ended question. The problem is: Is failure to name the system equal to failure to understand the system? On May 3 and 17, *Ming Pao* reported poll results showing that about 60% of respondents answered "don't know" when they were asked to comment on whether the new system is suitable to Hong Kong. The results were then interpreted as the public's failure to understand the voting system. When a poll reported that 60% of respondents expected a lower voter turnout rate in 1998 than 1995, *Ming Pao* reported a researcher's explanation that the public's seeming apathy to the election is probably due to the fact that they did not understand the new system and they do not know whether the system is good for Hong Kong³⁸.

The same set of poll results is certainly open to alternative interpretations. The questions asked may not be fair test of understanding. More important is what we should expect the public to know. Actually, a poll reported on April 29 on *Ming Pao* showed that more than 70% of respondents said that they did not worry that the new system would hinder their voting. This particular result can be said as supporting the government's argument that what the public needs to do is only to "draw a tick."

It is difficult to determine to what extent the public should understand the voting system. Here the author is not trying to evaluate media performance and support the government regarding the issue. Suffice it to point out that whether the system is too complicated or not cannot be determined unless we have criteria on how far public understanding should go. As Graber (1994a; 1994b) argued, the fact that the voters seemed to be ignorant in polls is sometimes attributable to the unreasonable

³⁷ *Ming Pao*, May, 13, 1998

standards set by pollsters and researchers. In the 1998 LegCo election, for the researchers the public should be able to name the system, to comment on the system's suitability to Hong Kong etc. But for the government the public really has to know virtually no specific things about the system. Probably both government and the pollsters are not absolutely right. In general, pollsters need to be aware of the standards they set, and the media should be aware of the possible interpretations of poll results. A method to improve the situation is to include in survey and media report more questions about the same issue (i.e., multiple indicators), thus providing a better and more comprehensive picture of the issue at hand.

After the election, the question facing the pollsters and the media became the unexpectedly high voter turnout. Some commentators returned to the voting system, not to stress its possible detrimental effect to turnout this time, but to suggest its possible positive effects, like allowing a wider range of choices for every individual voter. Some commentators even suggested new systems with more complexities (like introducing the opportunities for voters to choose candidates as well as lists). This turn of the tide only shows how naive the "difficulty debate" about the voting system was. Whether a system is too difficult is not something the government or the media tell the public, what the government and the media should do are to inform the public about the system. The public is allowed to judge and debate among themselves.

For reference the following tables give the candidate lists of the five constituencies and the percentage of votes they got. The lists are listed according to their position on the votes prepared by the government used on the election day. The ranking of the lists is determined by a random process. As the lists in New Territories East was already given above, the following will only include the four remaining constituencies.

Kowloon East (total vote: 261612, base rate percentage for one seat: 33.33%)

List	Candidate	% of votes won by lists	Winning candidate
DP	Szeto Wah Li Wah-ming Mak Hoi-wah	55.80%	Szeto Wah Li Wah-ming
DAP	Chan Yuen-han Kwok Pit-chang Tam Man-fai	41.78%	Chan Yuen-han
Fok (Ind.)	Fok Pui-yee	2.42%	-----

Hong Kong Island (total votes: 307611, base rate percentage for one seat: 25%)

List	Candidate	% of votes won by lists	Winning candidate
CP	Christine Loh	12.76%	Christine Loh
Chong (Ind.)	Chong Chan-yau	4.02%	-----
DAB	Cheng Kai-nam Yip Kwok-him Suen Kai-cheong Chung Shu-kun	29.32%	Cheng Kai-nam
LP	Wong Kei-ying Cho Sing-yu Lam Tsui-lin	2.43%	-----
DP	Martin Lee Yeung Sum Yuen Pun-keung Chan Kwok-leung	46.76%	Martin Lee Yeung Sum
Leung (Ind.)	Leung Wing-on	0.84%	-----
Chow (Ind.)	Chow Kit-bing	3.56%	-----
Li (Ind.)	Li Hung	0.30%	-----

Kowloon West (total votes: 205401, base rate percentage for one seat: 33.33%)

List	Candidate	% of votes won by lists	Winning candidate
DP	Lau Chin-shek Tao Kun-sun Wong Chung-ki	55.05%	Lau Chin-shek Tao Ken-shun
ADPL	Frederick Fung Liu Sing-lee Tam Kwok-kiu	19.25%	-----
AA	Chung Yee-fong	1.12%	-----
LP	Chiang Sai-cheong Chan Noi-yue Li King-wah	2.85%	-----
DAB	Tsang Yok-sing Ip Kwok-chung Wen Choy-bon	21.73%	Tsang Yok-sing

* Atlas Alliance

New Territories West (total votes: 375173, base rate percentage for one seat:

20%)

List	Candidate	% of votes won by lists	Winning candidate
DP	Lee Wing-tat Ho Chun-yan Wong Wai-yin Chan Shu-ying	39.21%	Li Wing-tat Ho Chun-yan
NTA*	Lam Wai-keung Tai Kuen Chow Ping-Tim Chan Ka-mun Tso Shiu-wai	6.90%	-----
NWSC**	Leung Yiu-chung	10.30%	Leung Yiu-chung
FR	Lee Cheuk-yan Ip Kwok-fun	12.45%	Li Cheuk-yan
Ting (Ind.)	Ting Yin-wah	2.98%	-----
LP	Chan Sing-kong Liu Kwong-sang Wong Kwok-keung	0.84%	-----
DAB	Tam Yiu-chung Leung Che-cheung Chau Chuen-heung Chan Wan-shan Hui Chiu-fai	19.35%	Tam Yiu-chung
ADPL	Yim Tin-shan	5.20%	-----
The Pioneer	Lam Chi-leung	0.26%	-----
123 DA***	Yum Sin-ling Chu Cho-yan Mak Ip-shing Shung King-fai	0.81%	-----
Yeung (Ind.)	Yeung Fuk-kwong	1.71%	-----

* New Territories Alliance

** Neighborhood and Workers Service Center

*** 123 Democratic Alliance

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